

CHRISTMAS DOUBLE ISSUE 124-PAGE SPECIAL

AUTOSPORT

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23-30 DECEMBER 2021

F1 2021 REVIEW

and the best motorsport
moments of the year

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- The first time a Verstappen raced Hamilton
- Drivers who made returns against the odds
- Top 10 UK club racers of 2021



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The good, the bad and the ugly of a memorable motorsport year

There were many remarkable moments in motorsport in 2021. There were some great passing moves, incredible finishes and, of course, lots of controversy – both on the track and behind closed doors.

We've picked out the best and worst moments in our special cover feature on page 18, an article that was in part inspired by an email to Autosport from 2016 Formula 1 world champion Nico Rosberg about his (newly crowned) Extreme E star Johan Kristoffersson!

As well as selecting the top 10 drivers from the Formula 2 and F3 championships this year (p28), we look back at the first time a Verstappen raced (and beat) Lewis Hamilton (p64), while Gary Watkins talks to some drivers who seemed to have missed their chance in motorsport, only to bounce back years later.

We've also got a bumper National section, looking back on an incredibly successful UK season despite you-know-what, including a run through the best club drivers and rivalries.

Thanks to the incredibly late finish to the F1 schedule and deadlines during the festive season, we've done our traditional review as a free 60-page supplement with this week's double issue. It contains all that you would expect from our F1 reviews, including the top 10 drivers, technical analysis and key stats. Which just leaves us to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEXT ISSUE
6 JANUARY**

The next F1 rivalry?
We look at the new Merc
line-up: Hamilton
vs Russell

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FREE WITH THIS ISSUE



F1 REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

All the races and drama
from the hard-fought 2021
season, including the top
five race drives, rise of
Norris and the tech battle.

Verstappen has taken the lead on season's final lap, and (inset) receives the trophy

MERCEDES BACKS DOWN AS FIA PROBES FINALE

FORMULA 1

Mercedes last week left it until the final hours to drop plans to take further action over the controversial finish to the Formula 1 season at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, after the FIA announced that it would be launching an investigation into the affair.

Following Mercedes' unsuccessful post-race protest over race director Michael Masi's last-lap restart, which ended in the team's Lewis Hamilton losing the championship to Red Bull's Max Verstappen, it lodged its intention to appeal the ruling with the FIA.

The move bought Mercedes more time to evaluate whether or not to proceed with action. It announced last Thursday – just hours before the start of the FIA prizegiving and gala, where Verstappen received the world championship trophy – that it had withdrawn its appeal. This came after the FIA launched a probe into the restart amid concerns that F1's image had been “tarnished”, claiming that a “misunderstanding” from teams, drivers and fans about the events took place.

“The FIA will therefore do its utmost to have this in motion within the Formula 1 governance and will propose to the Formula 1 Commission to give a clear mandate for study and proposal to the Sporting Advisory Committee, with the support of Formula 1 drivers, so that any identified meaningful feedback and conclusions be made before the beginning of the 2022 season,” said the FIA.

In confirming the withdrawal of its appeal, Mercedes made clear its “disbelief” over how the race ended, but said it would “actively work with this commission to build a better Formula 1 for every team and every fan

who loves this sport as much as we do” and “hold the FIA accountable for this process”.

Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff said he was “not interested” in talking to Masi about what happened. “Robbing him in the last lap of the race is unacceptable,” Wolff said. “That is why, from a personal standpoint, from a professional standpoint I cannot... my values and my sense of integrity just isn't compatible with the decisions that have been made on Sunday. It is up to the FIA to decide going forward how these decisions, how these situations, can be avoided.”

Wolff claimed Mercedes had enjoyed “good dialogue” with the FIA in the days following the race in Abu Dhabi, and that the team had trust in F1's governing body to take decisions to avoid a repeat of the controversy. But he added that both he and Hamilton, who has not spoken publicly since his brief parc ferme interview after the race, were “disillusioned” over what had happened. “If we break that fundamental principal of sporting fairness and authenticity of the sport, then suddenly the stopwatch doesn't become relevant anymore,” said Wolff. “We are exposed to random decision making. That is clear that you may fall out of love.”

Wolff hoped that Hamilton would not walk away from F1 over the incident. “I think as a racer, his heart will say I need to continue because he's at the peak of his game,” he said. “But we have to overcome the pain that was caused upon him, because he is a man with clear values, and it's difficult to understand that it happened.”

Neither Wolff nor Hamilton was present for the FIA prizegiving in Paris. Wolff said he opted to skip it because of his “loyalty to Lewis and because of my own personal integrity”. Mercedes was represented at the



gala by technical chief James Allison to collect the constructors' championship trophy.

Red Bull F1 boss Christian Horner felt confident that the controversy would soon blow over as "people in this business have very short memories", and that it would not taint Verstappen's title win. "We've had a lot of bad luck this year," said Horner. "We got fortunate with a safety car, but we made the right strategic calls. We won the race with great strategy, great teamwork, and great execution by Max. Time will move on. Max is a very, very deserving world champion, and we're incredibly proud of that. And the history books will always show that he's the 2021 world champion."

Outgoing FIA president Jean Todt felt sorry that neither Wolff nor Hamilton attended the prizegiving, but wanted to avoid discussing the saga. "Tonight we should celebrate, rather than trying to get into any kind of controversy," he said. "There is no point. What would it give? I think, in a way, I feel sorry, because Mercedes should have much more reward, as eight-time world champion for the manufacturers is unique. But this young guy [Verstappen] has made an outstanding job, and that's what we should focus on, rather than saying 'Are we going to punish [Hamilton] because he's not coming? [see story, right]'"

Todt did ponder if the FIA had been "too permissive" of criticism against its officials amid the continued scrutiny of Masi through much of the 2021 season. "I feel it is important to have a dialogue between the governing body, between the teams, between the drivers, between the commercial rights holders," he said. "But it should not go against us."

LUKE SMITH & JONATHAN NOBLE



Sulayem wins presidency – and wades into F1 row

FIA

Former rally driver Mohammed ben Sulayem has been elected as the new president of the FIA, taking over from the outgoing Jean Todt after the Frenchman's 12 years at the helm.

Ben Sulayem, 60, won 61.6% of the vote at the FIA's General Assembly to defeat Graham Stoker, who served as the FIA's deputy president for sport under Todt. Stoker recorded 36.6% of votes, while abstentions were recorded at 1.8%.

Emirati ben Sulayem's lengthy career in rallying provided 14 FIA Middle East Rally Championship titles before he moved into governance. He was the first Arab to be elected to the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, and previously served as vice-president for sport with the FIA.

His election represents a break with the past, since he becomes the first non-European to serve as president of the FIA, and comes after support was given to his 'FIA for Members' campaign by Motorsport UK, the governing body of British motorsport.

Ben Sulayem faced questions on the first day of his presidency about the fallout from the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, and pledged to ensure there would be an "instant solution" to prevent a repeat. He said there could be "no forgiveness" shown towards Lewis Hamilton if he was found to have breached F1's rules by not attending the end-of-season gala (see story, left).

"At the end of the day, rules are rules," he said. "So we are going to look into the side of where the technical rules are there to be employed and was he in breach? Of course, we'll have to also be following our rules. But in the meanwhile, it doesn't stop us from making a champion feel good about the sport."

"It's easy to be nice to people. And it is cheap to be nice. And it's also to motivate people. But definitely, if there is any breach, there is no forgiveness in this."

Among the names on ben Sulayem's leadership team are 2001 World Rally champion co-driver Robert Reid, who will serve as FIA deputy president for sport, and Fabiana Ecclestone, the wife of former F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone, who is vice-president for sport in South America. She is the first woman to hold the role within the FIA.

Ben Sulayem said that Ecclestone was chosen because of the impressive job she had done in her native Brazil rather than any links to her husband. "She has been involved in mobility in the club of Brazil, and she has been involved in the F1 of Brazil," he said. "So she has the sport and mobility side, and she has been in two of the Commissions, so her experience is there."

"Bernie said, 'You have to convince her. It's nothing to do with me.' So that was where his help stopped actually."

LUKE SMITH

➔ P15 OPINION



Russell got down to work with Mercedes in Abu Dhabi run

New faces at new teams for final F1 test of 2021

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FORMULA 1

Formula 1 concluded its on-track running in 2021 with a two-day test in Abu Dhabi last week, featuring a number of new names and next year's 18-inch tyres.

The action at the Yas Marina circuit last Tuesday and Wednesday was split between teams running modified 'mule cars' for the new rubber, and 2021 cars for young drivers.

It represented the final chance for teams to get to grips with the 18-inch tyres – up from 13-inches – after almost two years of test running with Pirelli. The new rubber will be introduced next year as part of the technical overhaul for F1, and is designed to ensure that drivers can push throughout a stint, as well as avoiding overheating issues and offering a mix of one and two-stop strategies.

The test also gave the chance for some drivers to settle in with their new teams. Valtteri Bottas and Guanyu Zhou both featured for Alfa Romeo ahead of their moves to the team for next year, while



O'Ward now has his sights set on an F1 future

George Russell completed two days of running for Mercedes. Russell said it was a "strange feeling" to now be a fully fledged driver with the team, but felt the new tyres were reacting "pretty positively".

"It felt pretty nice to drive," said Russell. "It's going to be very different next year, as the cars are going to be drastically changed compared to these current cars. So there's not an awful lot you can take away from it. Nevertheless, they do react pretty differently to the 13-inch tyres that we've raced on previously. Let's hope that carries through to next year and see how they react with the new regulations."

Fernando Alonso took part in the test for Alpine before dashing to Dubai for a 24-hour kart race last weekend. He was driving a 2018-spec Renault as a mule car, but felt the running was "better than nothing" to gather some information on the tyres for next year.

Nyck de Vries ended the test as the quickest driver in the 2021-spec Mercedes, while Liam Lawson and Logan Sargeant both got their first opportunities in F1 machinery, with AlphaTauri and Williams respectively. Another notable debutant was McLaren IndyCar star Pato O'Ward, who called his first F1 test "insane" after being rewarded with the opportunity by McLaren boss Zak Brown.

It made O'Ward clearly state that his ambition was now to make it to F1, telling Autosport he saw a two-year window to make the move across. "I'm going to do absolutely everything I can, and I'm going to push to my absolute maximum to make sure that I leave nothing on the table," he said. "Because you've got to take it. You've got to try, because if I don't I will regret it for the rest of my life."

LUKE SMITH

TESTING TIMES			
POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1	Nyck de Vries (Mercedes)	1m23.194s	-
2	Liam Lawson (AlphaTauri)	1m24.517s	-
3	Oscar Piastri (Alpine)	1m24.523s	-
4	Pato O'Ward (McLaren)	1m24.607s	-
5	Guanyu Zhou (Alfa Romeo)	1m25.142s	1m27.850s
6	Juri Vips (Red Bull)	1m25.198s	-
7	Nick Yelloly (Aston Martin)	1m25.333s	-
8	Robert Shwartzman (Haas)	-	1m25.348s
9	Lando Norris (McLaren)	-	1m25.809s
10	Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren)	1m26.252s	-
11	Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin)	-	1m26.379s
12	George Russell (Mercedes)	1m28.062s	1m26.404s
13	Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri)	-	1m26.451s
14	Lance Stroll (Aston Martin)	1m26.579s	-
15	Robert Shwartzman (Ferrari)	1m26.694s	-
16	Carlos Sainz Jr (Ferrari)	-	1m26.706s
17	Fernando Alonso (Alpine)	-	1m26.940s
18	Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)	1m26.989s	-
19	Valtteri Bottas (Alfa Romeo)	1m27.183s	-
20	Antonio Fuoco (Ferrari)	1m27.324s	-
21	Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri)	1m27.348s	-
22	Logan Sargeant (Williams)	1m27.476s	-
23	Esteban Ocon (Alpine)	1m27.553s	-
24	Sergio Perez (Red Bull)	-	1m27.991s
25	Max Verstappen (Red Bull)	1m28.013s	-
26	Mick Schumacher (Haas)	1m28.499s	-
27	Pietro Fittipaldi (Haas)	-	1m28.622s

Bold times denote driver's fastest lap time over both days.

MGU-H dropped from 2026 to aid VW entry

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 chiefs have confirmed that the MGU-H will be dropped from power units from 2026 as part of a new rules shake-up.

The complicated technology, which generates electrical power from exhaust heat, has proven to be expensive and complex since it formed part of the turbo-hybrid rules that were introduced in 2014. With F1 eager to attract new manufacturers from 2026, the MGU-H was viewed as a key part of the discussions.

The Volkswagen Group, which is poised to enter F1 with either its Audi or Porsche marques, was reluctant to enter if the MGU-H remained. During subsequent discussions between the current engine

suppliers and VW, it was agreed that the MGU-H could be dropped if other elements were put forward, such as a cost cap to ensure that new entrants would not trigger a fresh spending war.

That has now resulted in the FIA's World Motor Sport Council confirming that there will be four central elements to the new power units that are coming for 2026: the current 1.6-litre V6 engine will be retained; electrical power will increase to 350kW; the MGU-H will be ditched; and there will be a cost cap for engine development.

The FIA has also approved the outline concept of F1 running on 100% sustainable fuel alongside the increased electrical power boost.

One key element is also to ensure that the power units are attractive to spectators.



The FIA said that it wanted to focus on "powerful and high-revving power unit, car performance, sound, drivers' ability to race, avoiding excessive differentiation".

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said in the summer that he was willing to drop the MGU-H if other elements of

the rules were agreed. "I think it's a compromise that, I can't speak for anybody else, but at Mercedes we are prepared to enter in order to facilitate the entry of the Volkswagen Group," he said. "But there are several other topics where we need to find a compromise."

JONATHAN NOBLE

Lynn United with Jarvis for WEC

WEC

Oliver Jarvis and Alex Lynn will be rivals in the IMSA SportsCar Championship next season driving for Acura and Cadillac respectively. But the British pair will be teaming up in the World Endurance Championship with United Autosports.

New Wayne Taylor Racing Acura driver Jarvis and Lynn, who will be racing a Chip Ganassi Racing Caddy, were announced last week as team-mates in one of two ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2s that United will field in the WEC in 2022. They will share with silver-rated American Josh Pierson, who is on course to become the youngest driver to participate in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Both Jarvis and Lynn have made one-off appearances for United: Jarvis at Fuji in 2019 and Lynn at Le Mans this year (above).

United team principal Richard Dean described Jarvis and Lynn as "perfect team-mates" for WEC debutant Pierson,



who competed in USF2000 in 2020-21 and will not be 16 years old until February.

"Even though we already knew his calibre, Alex really impressed us at Le Mans, so we were keen to get him on board for 2022," he said. "Oliver had a taste of racing with us at Fuji, so I'm thrilled he has now joined us for a full season of WEC."

Jarvis said he was "over the moon" to be joining United for what will be his first full WEC campaign since 2017, the year he finished runner-up in the P2 points with

the Jota-run Jackie Chan DC Racing squad as well as second overall at Le Mans. Former Aston Martin WEC driver Lynn added that he "really enjoyed being part of the team at Le Mans" and that "it will be exciting to be part of the world championship again".

The signing of Jarvis and Lynn completes the United WEC squad. American Will Owen will be the silver-ranked driver in the car shared by 2019-20 P2 champions Filipe Albuquerque and Phil Hanson.

GARY WATKINS



Westbrook back in IMSA as Stevens bags enduro role

IMSA

Richard Westbrook will make a full-time return to the IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2022. The former Chevrolet and Ford factory driver, a regular in North America in 2011-19, will contest the full season next year aboard a JDC-Miller Motorsports Cadillac Daytona Prototype international (above).

The 46-year-old will race the team's solo Caddy DPi-VR alongside team-regular Tristan Vautier, part of the winning line-up at this year's Sebring 12 Hours. He takes the place of Loic Duval, who is stepping back into an endurance role to focus on his World Endurance Championship programme with Peugeot. Experienced amateur racer Ben Keating will be the fourth driver at the season-opening Daytona 24 Hours next month.

"Having tested with the team at Road Atlanta in October, I understand that there's a lot of talent there," said Westbrook, who is also aiming to remain in the WEC with Glickenhaus. "I've always loved racing in North America, and to be honest I missed it and all the great tracks like Road America, Watkins Glen and Mosport."

Ex-Formula 1 racer Will Stevens has broken into IMSA for the first time after landing a drive with the Wayne Taylor Racing Acura squad in the four enduros that make up the Michelin-sponsored Endurance Cup. The Brit will share the solo WTR Acura ARX-05 with full-season drivers Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque, while Alexander Rossi will return to the team as a fourth driver for Daytona.

Stevens has landed the drive in North America after notching up five victories across the World Endurance Championship and the European Le Mans Series driving LMP2 machinery since 2016. "Every sportscar driver is looking to the arrival of LMDh in 2023 and I'm trying to position myself as best as I can," said the 30-year-old, who is also closing on a European-based programme for 2022. "Racing for a successful team like WTR and being with Acura is definitely a step in the right direction."

Audi factory driver Rene Rast will make a return to Daytona after an absence of two years. The German, part of Mazda's DPi roster at the big race in 2018 and 2019, is one of a number of star names brought into the G-Drive Racing LMP2 line-up for its one-off IMSA appearance.

Rast will race one of two ORECA-Gibson 07s fielded by G-Drive in partnership with Algarve Pro. His team-mates are IndyCar regular Ed Jones, sportscar debutant Oliver Rasmussen, who raced in FIA Formula 3 in 2021, and Francois Heriau. Formula 2 race winner Luca Ghiotto, P2 regular James Allen, Tijmen van der Helm (another F3 racer and sportscar first-timer) and John Falb will race the other car.

DragonSpeed, winner of the P2 class at Daytona in 2019 and 2020, will run a trio of IndyCar drivers in its solo ORECA. Pato O'Ward and Colton Herta will share with Devlin DeFrancesco, who is moving into IndyCar in 2022, and sportscar stalwart Eric Lux.

GARY WATKINS

Bernhard team switches to DTM

DTM

Timo Bernhard's Porsche team will join the DTM next year. The two-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner is moving Team 75 Motorsport over from ADAC GT Masters to run a solo car in the second year of the championship's new era with GT3 rules.

The Porsche 911 GT3-R, entered under the KUS Team Bernhard banner, will be raced by factory driver Thomas Preining, who was part of Bernhard's line-up in Masters in 2021. The team is also shifting its GT4 programme with a pair of Porsche 718s over from ADAC GT4 Germany to the DTM Trophy.

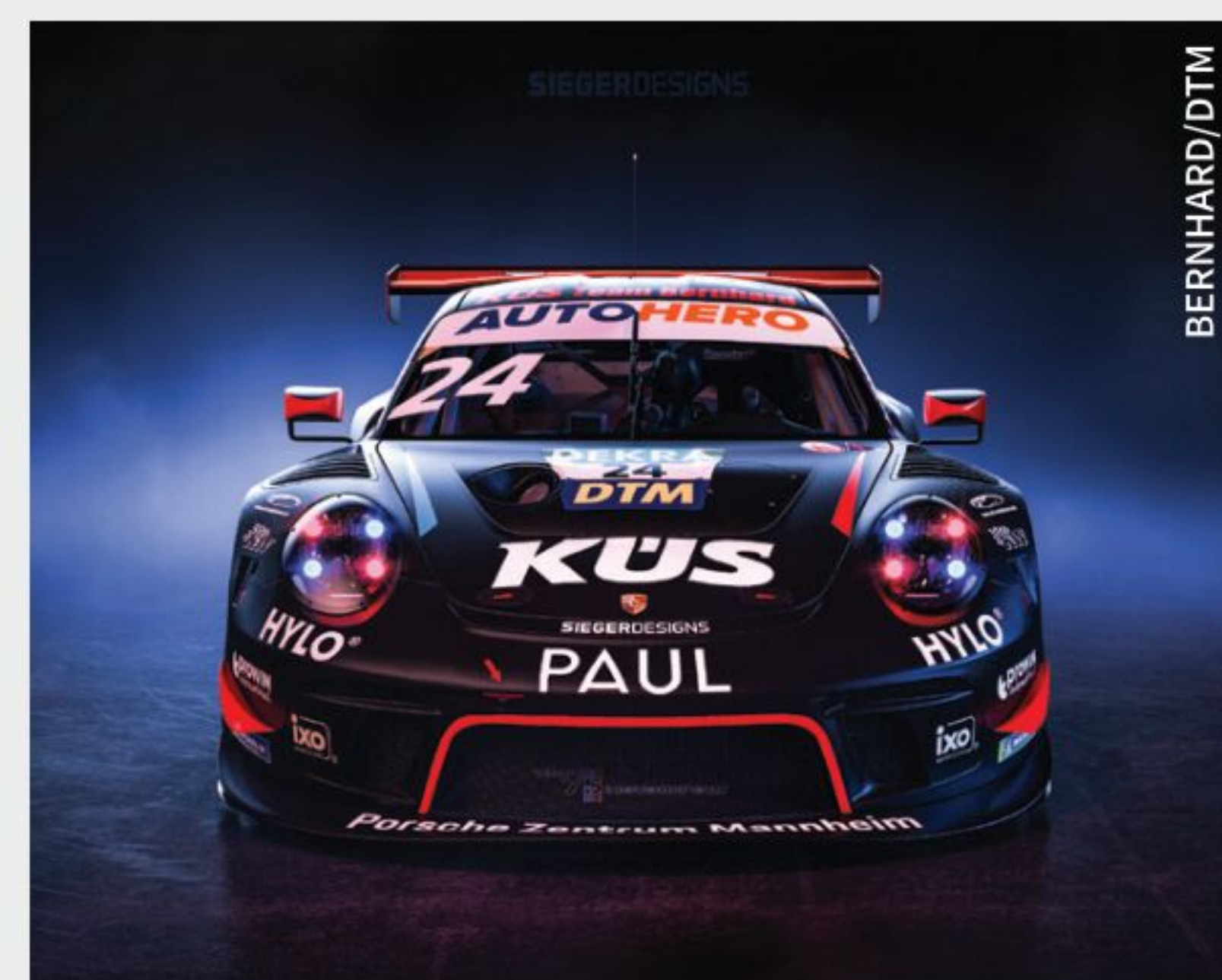
"After six years in GT Masters we wanted to experience something new to help the development of the team," said Bernhard, who established his operation with father Rudiger in 2011. "For our partners and sponsors, we felt that the DTM would offer a bit more visibility."

Bernhard, who retired from full-time racing at the end of 2019, added that it was important for the family operation, now team-managed by his sister Jennifer Leising, to focus on a single car in its first year in a new arena.

The 2015 and 2017 World Endurance Championship title winner suggested that it was a "good time" to enter the DTM. "We're moving in with a car we know, so the new bits for us are going to be a different Balance of Performance and tyres [Michelins rather than Pirellis] and the pitstops," Bernhard explained. "These performance pitstops are probably going to be the biggest challenge, because in the DTM the best teams are changing tyres in six and a half seconds."

Bernhard's squad becomes the second to commit to running with Porsche in the DTM next year. SSR Performance, which made a one-off at the Nurburgring round in 2021, has confirmed two 911 GT3-Rs.

GARY WATKINS



Loeb returns in M-Sport Ford

WRC

Nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb will make his series comeback on next month's Monte Carlo Rally season opener with the M-Sport Ford squad.

Loeb had been heavily linked to a WRC return since testing M-Sport's new Rally1 Puma hybrid in Spain and France in October and November respectively. Talks between the 47-year-old Frenchman, sponsors and the team have been ongoing for months before a deal was finally reached to allow Loeb to pilot a fourth Puma on the 20-23 January curtain raiser.

The rally will represent Loeb's first WRC event since last year's Rally Turkey, where he finished third during a part-time campaign with Hyundai.

"I am happy to work with M-Sport now," said Loeb. "Since the beginning of my career I was fighting against Ford, but I have always known Malcolm [Wilson, team boss] to be somebody very involved in the team and passionate about rallying. We have always had a good relationship. I am really excited for Monte Carlo."

Loeb's new deal with M-Sport was



announced alongside confirmation that Adrien Fourmaux has been handed a full-time campaign in a third Puma by the British squad, joining the already announced Craig Breen and Gus Greensmith. "I am really looking forward to competing at the highest level in M-Sport Ford and Red Bull Motorsport colours," said the 26-year-old Frenchman, who made his WRC top-tier debut with M-Sport this year.

At this stage, Loeb is only set to contest Monte Carlo, but it has not been ruled out that the programme could be extended

to further events. His Monte start will bring him up against newly crowned eight-time champion Sebastien Ogier, who will kick off his partial 2022 campaign with the famous asphalt event, but also has no further rallies yet confirmed.

Ogier stepped up preparations by testing the all-new Toyota GR Yaris for the first time earlier this month in France. "It has been exciting to test it," he said. "The team right now have a big challenge to try to be ready for Monte Carlo."

TOM HOWARD

Porsche reveals pics of new LMDh contender

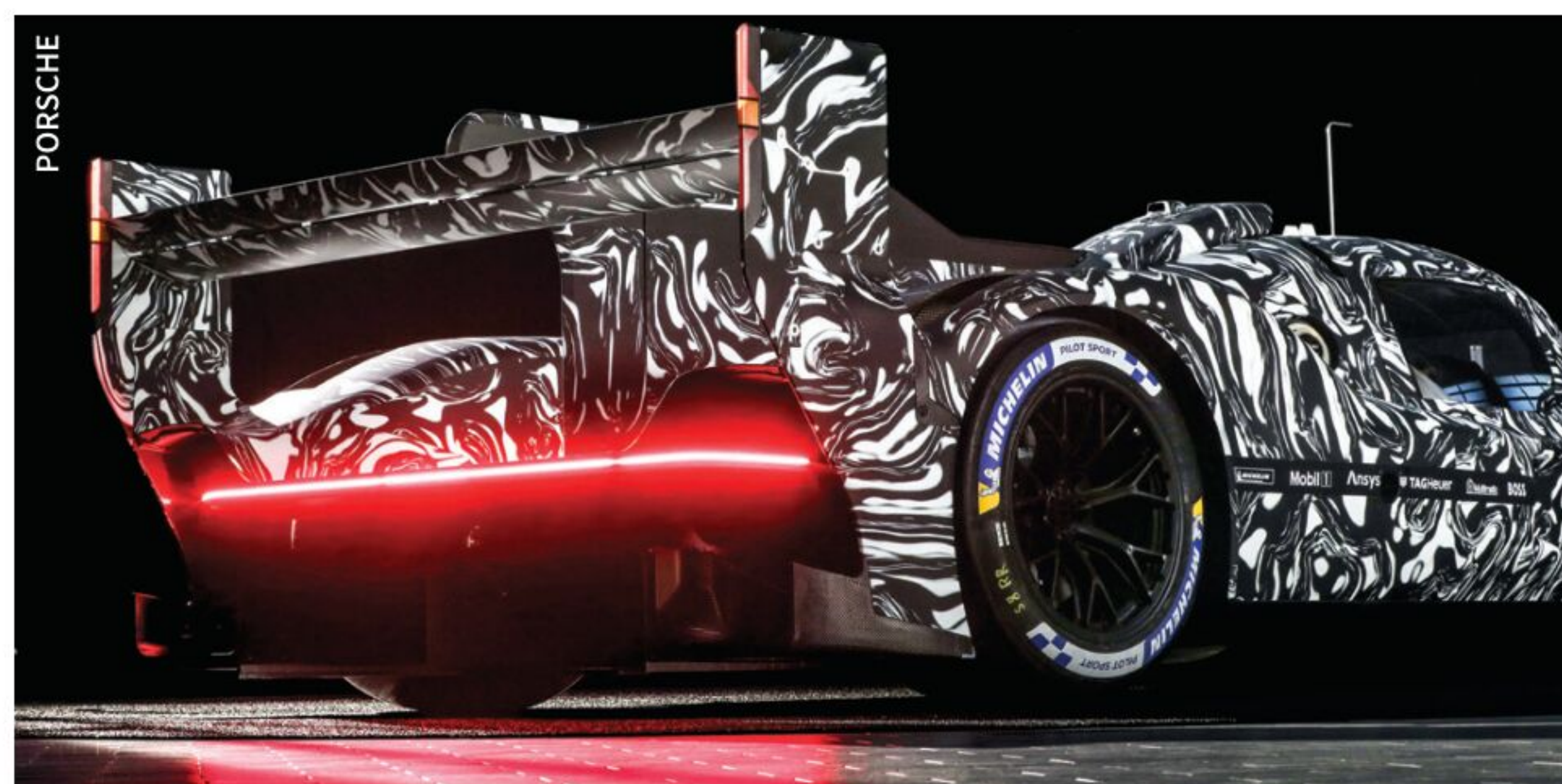
WEC/IMSA

Porsche has given the world a sneak preview of its new LMDh prototype. The German manufacturer released teaser photographs last Saturday of the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship contender when it set out its motorsport programmes for next year.

The pictures, none of which showed the full car, were accompanied by the confirmation of Felipe Nasr

and Dane Cameron as its first drivers. They will spearhead development of the car ahead of its competition debut in 2023, said Porsche. That is due to begin in January, although it remains unclear for the moment whether the car has undertaken the shakedown that Porsche suggested last month was due to take place before the end of the year.

Neel Jani has re-signed for the marque, but won't be continuing in the GTE Pro squad next year. He will continue his



reserve role in Formula E, but no other programme has been announced for the Swiss.

Jani's place alongside Kevin Estre will be taken Michael Christensen, the driver he replaced in the WEC line-up this year. Laurens Vanthoor

will recreate the 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours-winning line-up at the longer races. Gianmaria Bruni and Richard Lietz continue in the other car, again with Frederic Makowiecki as the third driver.

GARY WATKINS

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Sutton joins Cammish in Ford BTCC superteam

BTCC

Three-time British Touring Car champion Ash Sutton has made a shock switch to the Motorbase Performance-run NAPA Racing Ford Focus squad for the 2022 season.

The 27-year-old (right of pic) will partner Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion and BTCC returnee Dan Cammish in an all-star line-up, while two-time series race winner Ollie Jackson and Sam Osborne continue under the Motorbase umbrella in the squad's other two Focuses.

It was clear by the end of this season that there was a looming parting of the ways between Sutton and the Laser Tools Racing squad with which he won the 2020 and 2021 titles in an Infiniti Q50. Such an eventuality would also bring an end to the partnership between LTR and the BMR Racing operation of Sutton's manager Warren Scott.

BMR is understood to have been working on a project to build a Jaguar XE to NGTC rules, which Scott did not want to comment on, before the Motorbase deal was done.

"Pete [Osborne, Motorbase boss] came to me a couple of months ago to see if I was interested, but I wasn't sure what my commitments would be," said Sutton, who describes his new deal as 'multi-year'. "I had a few deals on the table and had to work out which one I wanted to go for. It became apparent that what Pete was offering with the NAPA partnership could secure me in the BTCC for a sensible amount of time."

Sutton is taking some of the BMR staff with which he won BTCC titles in the Infiniti to his new squad. "I've got Antonio Carrozza my race engineer, my number-one mechanic and my data engineer from the



past couple of seasons," he said. "They're now a part of the Motorbase family and working on the new project."

While he has won all three of his BTCC titles in rear-wheel-drive cars, Sutton has no qualms about his switch to the front-driven Ford. "When I jumped in a TCR

car [in 2018] at Oulton, we were quickest in the first session," he said, "and when I went and did TCR Europe I was in the top three straight away. The front-wheel-drive moves around a lot different to a rear-drive car, but it's just about finding the limits."

MARCUS SIMMONS

...as teenager heads for Laser Tools Infiniti



BTCC

Title-winning British Touring Car Championship team Laser Tools Racing is pressing on for 2022 in the wake of its split with Ash Sutton and BMR Racing.

The team has recruited 18-year-old single-seater convert Dexter Patterson to join race winner Aiden Moffat (left) in its squad of Infiniti Q50s. Patterson, a former Sauber junior,

scored a podium finish in a part-season of GB3 this year, as well as scoring points on a strong debut in Formula Regional European by Alpine. A highly promising tryout in the Infiniti at Snetterton preceded his move to the BTCC.

Team boss Bob Moffat – father of Aiden – is upbeat about the split with BMR after the relationship turned sour. The team recruited Dan Millard, who ran

Sutton's Subaru to the 2017 BTCC crown, to engineer Moffat Jr in 2020, and he will remain on duties for next season.

The team plans to continue with three cars, and is in advanced discussions with drivers. This car would require the use of one of the TBL licences of 2021 LTR Infiniti driver Carl Boardley, who is unlikely to race in the BTCC next year.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Abu Dhabi test previews F2 grid

FORMULA 2

Junior single-seater cognoscenti got a sneak preview of much of the likely FIA Formula 2 grid for 2022 when the series held its annual post-season three-day test at Yas Marina last week.

The general theme is that you can be confident that anyone taking part with one team for the entire test will end up at that squad the following season – at the 2020 runout, that was true of 17 of the 19 drivers who did all three days in the same car.

In the immediate run-up to the test, which began on Thursday, there was a spate of driver line-up announcements for 2022. Established ace Felipe Drugovich's return to MP Motorsport after a year at Virtuosi was confirmed, DAMS declared that Roy Nissany is staying on, Logan Sargeant was named at Carlin, while Virtuosi went the whole hog in announcing Marino Sato and FIA F3 runner-up Jack Doohan.

While Drugovich ended the test second fastest and Doohan third, the overall times were topped by Jehan Daruvala with Prema Racing (above). The Indian has been with Carlin for his first two seasons of F2, but was a Prema driver when he claimed third in the 2019 FIA F3 Championship. Is he on course for a return to the Italian team, potentially alongside its new FIA F3 champ

TOP 10 YAS MARINA TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Jehan Daruvala (Prema)	1m35.435s
2	Felipe Drugovich (MP)	1m35.577s
3	Jack Doohan (Virtuosi)	1m35.851s
4	Theo Pourchaire (ART)	1m35.981s
5	Logan Sargeant (Carlin)	1m36.155s
6	Ralph Boschung (Campos)	1m36.203s
7	Liam Lawson (Carlin)	1m36.208s
8	Juri Vips (Hitech)	1m36.329s
9	Marcus Armstrong (Hitech)	1m36.380s
10	Dennis Hauger (Prema)	1m36.426s

Dennis Hauger? "Obviously Jehan is going to be in F2 but we can't confirm anything as of yet," said Pieter Belmans of the Winway management group that looks after Daruvala. "He had a positive experience with them in 2019 but we can't comment."

Meanwhile, Red Bull junior Liam Lawson jumped across to Carlin from Hitech. Juri Vips remained at Hitech, joined by Ferrari protege Marcus Armstrong, who has a relationship with team boss Oliver Oakes dating back to his karting days...

MARCUS SIMMONS

➔ **P28 TOP 10 F2/F3 DRIVERS OF 2021**

IN THE HEADLINES

SIR LEWIS AT THE CASTLE

One day before the FIA prizegiving gala that he didn't attend, Formula 1 world championship runner-up Sir Lewis Hamilton was at Windsor Castle last Wednesday to be knighted by Prince Charles. He received the knighthood in the Queen's New Year's Honours at the end of last year.

HAZEL CHAPMAN 1927-2021

Hazel Chapman, the widow of Lotus founder Colin, has died aged 94. She was a key figure in the Lotus story: she competed in the first trials cars built by her husband, lent him the money to start his first company, and was a director of the Team Lotus Formula 1 squad.

D&R UP TO TWO FOR INDY 500

Stalwart Indianapolis 500 team Dreyer & Reinbold Racing is back up to two cars for next year's running of the race. D&R regular Sage Karam will as usual pilot one of the machines, and he will be joined this time by Santino Ferrucci, whose best finish in three Indy 500 starts is a fourth place with Dale Coyne Racing in 2020.

LIND JOINS KLIEN IN McLAREN

British GT champion Dennis Lind is to join ex-Red Bull/Jaguar Formula 1 driver Christian Klien in a GT World Challenge Endurance Cup assault next season. Ex-Lamborghini works driver Lind will share the McLaren 720S GT3 of JP Motorsport, which is stepping up with Klien from its regular territory in International GT Open. The other member of the all-pro line-up is Vincent Abril, who has departed the Mercedes factory roster. JP will also run a second car, in which team owner Patryk Krupinski will be one of the drivers.

ORIOLA'S TIN-TOP TITLE

Remember SEAT-mounted ex-World Touring Car race winner Pepe Oriola? He wrapped up the inaugural TCR South America crown last weekend at the wheel of a Honda Civic.

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How Red Bull can be even better

Compared to Ferrari and Mercedes, Red Bull is a relatively young F1 entity. That only enhances its achievements – and there's plenty of scope for more to follow

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

So far this millennium, there have been three truly great Formula 1 team dynasties. Respectful apologies must go to Renault (now Alpine) and McLaren but, in terms of sheer title numbers, they don't get anywhere near Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull.

Red Bull has the youngest heritage of the three, even though the current Mercedes team's roots can be traced all the way back to Tyrrell (but really started with BAR). Ferrari, of course, is the only (nearly) ever-present competitor in the F1 World Championship. But the former Stewart and Jaguar squad has achieved tremendous success since its Red Bull takeover ahead of the 2005 season.

It took six years before it won a title at the end of 2010, so in that sense was beaten by Mercedes' five completed seasons from its return as an F1 entrant through to Lewis Hamilton's first with his current team in 2014. But Red Bull did so through a less considerable rules overhaul than the V8-V6 turbo switch, and indeed it was (pre-Mercedes) Brawn that beat Red Bull to the critical double diffuser innovation of the downforce-slashing 2009 rules reset.

And then there's its company lineage. "We're just an 'energy drinks company' going racing," team boss Christian Horner said ahead of the Abu Dhabi season finale just gone, referring to Hamilton's comments a decade earlier when he had been asked if he would one day entertain a Red Bull switch.

The team is extremely well funded via overall Red Bull boss

"What Red Bull has achieved is remarkable. It's not a garagista, but a marketing behemoth"

Dietrich Mateschitz but, considering the success of its previous F1 guises and the very real impact of heritage DNA in motorsport projects, what Red Bull has achieved in F1 is truly remarkable. It is not a garagista squad, but a marketing behemoth that can therefore claim a truly unique kind of F1 success story. And, for that, fair play to the team.

Add in its junior programme, which respected sports writer Richard Williams recently described in *The Guardian* as "the most unsparingly effective scheme of its kind since the Spartans left male babies out on a hillside to see which of them would survive to be trained as warriors", and Red Bull's contribution to F1 increases. Its scheme is utterly ruthless but, in 2022, eight of the 20 drivers on the grid will have raced for Red Bull or its AlphaTauri/Toro Rosso sister squad – that's an impressive reach.

There's no doubt that Red Bull needed the off-season rule tweaks that so hampered the low-raked Mercedes to get on terms with its rival in car performance terms. But it succeeded in taming the recalcitrant excesses of the RB16 with the RB16B, and then steadily harnessed and improved its package to enable Max Verstappen's triumph. It squandered its advantage to Mercedes at times, with Hamilton's team also developing and fettling its way into much closer competition than at the start of 2021, but Red Bull did what no team has done since the turbo hybrid era began – it took a title from Mercedes. And that deserves huge praise.

But, of course, even the best can be better – that's the whole mantra Toto Wolff has instilled at Mercedes. So, where might Red Bull find gains for 2022?

Off-track, the team's public relations messaging has been baffling at times. Considering Red Bull's considerable coffers, it was pretty disingenuous for Horner to claim this year's title fight was "David v Goliath". Following the Silverstone crash, Red Bull motorsport advisor Helmut Marko calling for Hamilton to face a race ban was rather jaw-dropping considering the stewards decreed he was only "predominantly" to blame. Backing your driver and fostering determination through 'us-against-the-world' motivation is understandable, but it's also risky.

On-track, if Verstappen can produce passing moves such as on the opening lap in Abu Dhabi and not as he did at the second start in Jeddah, plus tone down the needlessly aggressive defending he produced in Brazil and Saudi Arabia, then his journey to being F1's best overall driver will be complete.

Sergio Perez must get closer to Verstappen's level next year. He improved in what remained a difficult package, even if rear-end instability was much better this season, but for 2022 Red Bull cannot afford to have one of its cars regularly removed from the lead fight by qualifying poorly, particularly if George Russell adapts to his new home at Mercedes as quickly and as well as many expect. And this is assuming the status quo at the front of the grid holds, which is hard to predict in a massive regulations overhaul.

This is a big consideration for Red Bull's future. How well it does in 2022 may well already be determined. If it has spent too many resources on narrowly winning Verstappen his first title, there is a big danger that he may not win again for several more years if critical focus on the 2022 challenger has been lost and Red Bull therefore starts the new era off the pace.

That said, a reverse scenario may well come to pass and, considering Verstappen's comments that he hopes "we can do this for 10 or 15 years together", then it may all be worth it. People can change their minds and sports people tend to do so regularly. But there is no doubt that Red Bull is a team that loves its star, and he loves it right back. That's solid ground for further success. 🏆



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A new motorsport era begins

The election of new FIA president Mohammed ben Sulayem heralds a fresh approach to the governance of world motorsport, and the effects will be far-reaching

JAMES ALLEN

The election of a new FIA president is a rare occurrence, when you consider that only Jean Todt and Max Mosley have served in the role since 1991. So for 30 years — the entire span of many motorsport fans' followership of the sport — these two giants have been at the helm.

It is in that context that we have to approach the election of Mohammed ben Sulayem of the UAE, a former multiple rally champion and more recently organiser in the Middle East region. He is the first non-European ever to be elected president and he's a man in a hurry, with an ambition to double the number of worldwide competition licence holders in his initial four-year term.

Ben Sulayem takes on the most powerful role in motorsport at a time of great change in the world outside. Motorsport is only half of his new mandate as he also heads the Mobility side of the FIA, which relates to topics around general motoring; road safety, crash tests, vehicle emissions and so on. The automotive industry is arguably at the greatest pivot point in its history since the invention of the internal combustion engine, and everything that happens in motorsport is downstream of that.

However, some would argue, and I would be one of them, that motorsport should also be viewed as being upstream, as so much of the technological progress that is seen in road cars comes from what is proven first on the race track. There are countless examples

“Ben Sulayem's election was a signal from clubs around the world that it's time for change”

from seat belts to disc brakes, but it is in the field of electric motors, hybrid engines and sustainable fuels that the sport has real future relevance. This is one of the most powerful arguments for motorsport's validity, particularly at a time when the world's population is becoming increasingly engaged in the arguments on climate change.

And it will be up to the new FIA administration to make that case at the highest levels of government, led by ben Sulayem, but also by his deputy president for sport Robert Reid, World Rally champion with Subaru in 2001 as co-driver to Richard Burns.

Ben Sulayem's election, beating Graham Stoker — the 'continuity candidate' as Todt's deputy president for sport — by 61.6% to 36.6%, was a signal from the clubs around the world who voted that it's time for a change. Ben Sulayem and his team

had done more than 2000 hours of consultation with national federations, listening to their concerns and ambitions. His manifesto gave them the narrative they were looking for; a change of approach, a new world order.

This takes nothing away from Todt's legacy, and a great deal has been achieved in his 12 years as FIA president. But there are some significant changes that have taken place with this election that fans will become aware of over time and that will reshape the sport.

Ben Sulayem will depart from the model used by Mosley and Todt and will appoint a CEO to run the day-to-day activities. Todt and Mosley were the de facto CEO in their administrations, combining both the political and business management of the federation. Ben Sulayem will be a different kind of president, focusing on the political and strategic side. Many national federations operate in this way with a CEO beneath the chairman or president, including Motorsport UK, whose chairman David Richards publicly backed ben Sulayem's campaign.

The ultimate authority in the FIA lies with the World Motor Sport Council. This is the body that meets four times a year and approves calendars, rule changes and so on. The composition of the WMSC, post elections, is quite different with no seat for representatives from Italy, France, Germany or Japan. The UK has a seat and is represented by Richards, who becomes a more powerful figure on the world stage as a result of this election. Many new countries now have World Council representation such as Barbados and Turkey.

What does this mean? It means a turning of the page from the old order; the influence of the old powerhouse nations will diminish (excluding the UK) and the federation will move forward with more of a priority on developing the sport and empowering the regions, especially those outside Europe.

It means an emphasis on making the sport more accessible to participants and to fans, reducing costs, particularly in developing countries, and building up the power of the regions. They want to help regions such as Africa, Asia and the Middle East to build motorsport infrastructure to be able to develop their own stars of the future, male and female. Gaming and Esports will also play an important role, both as a feeder for real motorsport but also as a participation sport in its own right.

It also means a return, albeit in the background, for Bernie Ecclestone. The former F1 CEO, now 91 years old, is a supporter of ben Sulayem and is represented in the leadership team by his wife Fabiana, who was elected vice-president for sport for South America.

How much influence Ecclestone wields from the back seat over matters relating to Formula 1 and other branches of motorsport, time will tell. ❧

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YOUR SAY

I am angry with both team principals for their efforts to influence the outcome of races, but mostly now I am angry with Mercedes for dropping the opportunity to appeal

J STREET

Sanction threat adds insult to injury

Who can blame Lewis Hamilton for not attending the FIA awards ceremony? To add insult to injury, there is now a suggestion that he may be sanctioned for his non-attendance. Here is an organisation that may penalise a competitor for breaking a single rule, when they themselves have just driven a train through the rulebook. They should be deeply embarrassed.

As much as I admire Max Verstappen's speed and tenacity, and respect that he did everything that was asked of him in Abu Dhabi, he neither 'won' the race nor the world championship – he was gifted both.

I am angry with the race director and stewards, and I am angry with both team principals for their efforts to influence the outcome of races, but mostly now I am angry with Mercedes for dropping the opportunity to appeal. They cannot claim it is for the good of the sport as that is the very reason they should have seen it through to the end. The investigation that the FIA have promised will be a whitewash, nothing major will change, there might be some minor tweaks to the rules but no heads will roll.

The only fair outcome is to discard the results of the last race and declare the world championship null and void for 2021. Surely on reflection Verstappen would not have wanted to win the title in such a manner, where a stain will hang over this year's title for ever.

J Street
Hertfordshire

Verstappen's championship more than deserved

Thank you very much for your excellent report on the last grand prix of the season, very enjoyable issue (16 December). Now the dust has settled, may I take this opportunity to congratulate Max Verstappen for winning the F1 crown, over the season it is more than deserved. He has brought life into a stagnant F1 'show', thank you, not forgetting Honda and the Red Bull team.

In Abu Dhabi, we saw the true colours of mister 'nice guy' Toto Wolf, always smiling and friendly when winning, but this time... remember Toto, sometimes you have to lose.

And as far as the comments made by George Russell on Twitter, not impressed, but then Mercedes driver George

felt that he should support the team. Nevertheless I wish him all the best for 2022 and I will be supporting him all the way.

Lewis Hamilton, great driver no doubt but with a short memory. He obviously forgets his questionable and extremely dangerous driving at Silverstone when he took out Verstappen.

To finish, did you hear one of the comments made by David Coulthard after the race when talking about Michael Masi's decisions? He made a quick comparison with football: "Alex Ferguson of Manchester United never queried a referee's decision and got on with the job." Take note Toto!

Salvador Valiente
Oakham, Rutland

Fitting tribute to one of the greats

It is very fitting that a great driver and champion like Al Unser should receive a superlative obituary (16 December). David Malsher-Lopez has excelled in writing about the man and his career, not just relating his successes but identifying and articulating the reasons why Unser (below) was such an accomplished driver and champion.

Dr David D Hebb
By email



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IMAGES



Daring Kristoffersson leaves rivals in dust

Saudi Arabia Extreme E

Alejandro Agag demands his motorsport creations look stellar on TV. But when he reckoned Extreme E would resemble “Star Wars pod racing”, it seemed like hyperbole. It wasn’t.

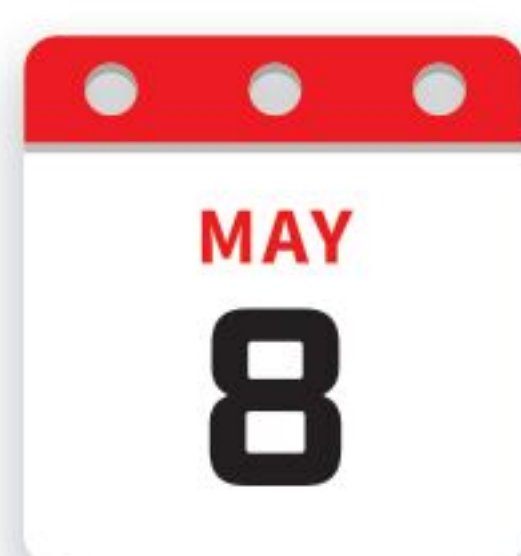
The sandy AlUla backdrop for an inaugural April round in Saudi Arabia was otherworldly thanks to the red-rock cliffs.

The electric-powered wheels started to spin, with a grid for the Desert X-Prix final populated by (now) four-time World Rallycross champion Johan Kristoffersson, World Rally legend Sebastien Loeb and 2019 World RX king Timmy Hansen.

The huge plumes of dust kicked up by each Odyssey 21 E-SUV made overtaking tough. But again, expectations were overturned – and almost immediately so – thanks to Kristoffersson.

The driver who Nico Rosberg had signed via a direct message on Instagram entered the first corner on the outside and in last place. But he dived blindly through the cloud ahead, picked off Loeb, and cut to the inside to emerge in an unlikely lead ahead of Hansen. The Swede had carried 10mph more through the corner than any other pass.

“He was miles back and explored a very creative and totally new line,” says Rosberg. “We thought it impossible to come out in front because that weekend was dominated by poor visibility. It was special.”



Evans's magic Monaco pass

Monaco Formula E

In a Formula E season when massive peaks and troughs were the norm for the title protagonists, how appropriate that, after one of the series' all-time lowest moments at Valencia (see p24), it should respond with arguably its finest-ever chapter.

The Monaco E-Prix was special, and not just for the location. Formula E showed how far it had come from the earlier races that were held on a 'diet' lap of the principality. In May, the Gen2 machines delivered one of the most thrilling bouts on the full grand prix layout.

While F1 races draw flak for the lack of overtaking around the famous street course, Formula E stole the show with possibly the best pass in its seven-year history. Mitch Evans got the run on reigning champion Antonio Felix da Costa up the hill out of Sainte Devote to slice around the *outside* of Beau Rivage with barely an inch to spare against the barrier. He nabbed the lead as viewers caught their breath.

But the moment came at a heavy cost. The Kiwi's heavy right foot on the climb to Casino Square came back to bite him when it depleted his Jaguar's energy levels to tee up da Costa's final-lap revenge for the win.

After all the calendar compromises brought about by the pandemic, here Formula E was back on a bona fide street circuit in one of the most legendary motorsport settings. And as a result, organisers pledged to make the previously biennial visit to Monaco instead become a yearly fixture.

Prior to the event, everyone knew Formula E lap times would pale in comparison to F1. But after these 26 laps, the electric grid proved that speed isn't everything.



Correa makes his racing return

Barcelona FIA Formula 3

Juan Manuel Correa's return to racing less than two years after the horrific F2 crash at Spa that left him in a coma was nothing less than miraculous.

After suffering catastrophic injuries in the incident, which claimed the life of Anthoine Hubert, Correa was forced to relearn many things "from zero" over an "excruciating, long, painful and mentally hard year and a half". But he joined ART Grand Prix to drive in F3 and scored 11 points, while also rejoining Sauber's junior programme.

Despite struggling physically in the early part of the season, his highest finish came in the first sprint race of the second round at Paul Ricard, at one point battling for fourth before finishing sixth.

When he returned in August to the scene of his accident to once again tackle Eau Rouge, American-Ecuadorian Correa proved his steely determination, carrying with him a tribute to the late Hubert and a dream to one day reach F1 in his honour. >>





Pourchaire makes his mark on Monte Carlo

Monaco FIA Formula 2

Whatever happens in Theo Pourchaire's career, he will surely always remember his first outing in Monaco. Aged

just 17, the Frenchman produced a masterful display beyond his years to take pole position and then convert that to a dominant feature race win – his first victory in Formula 2.

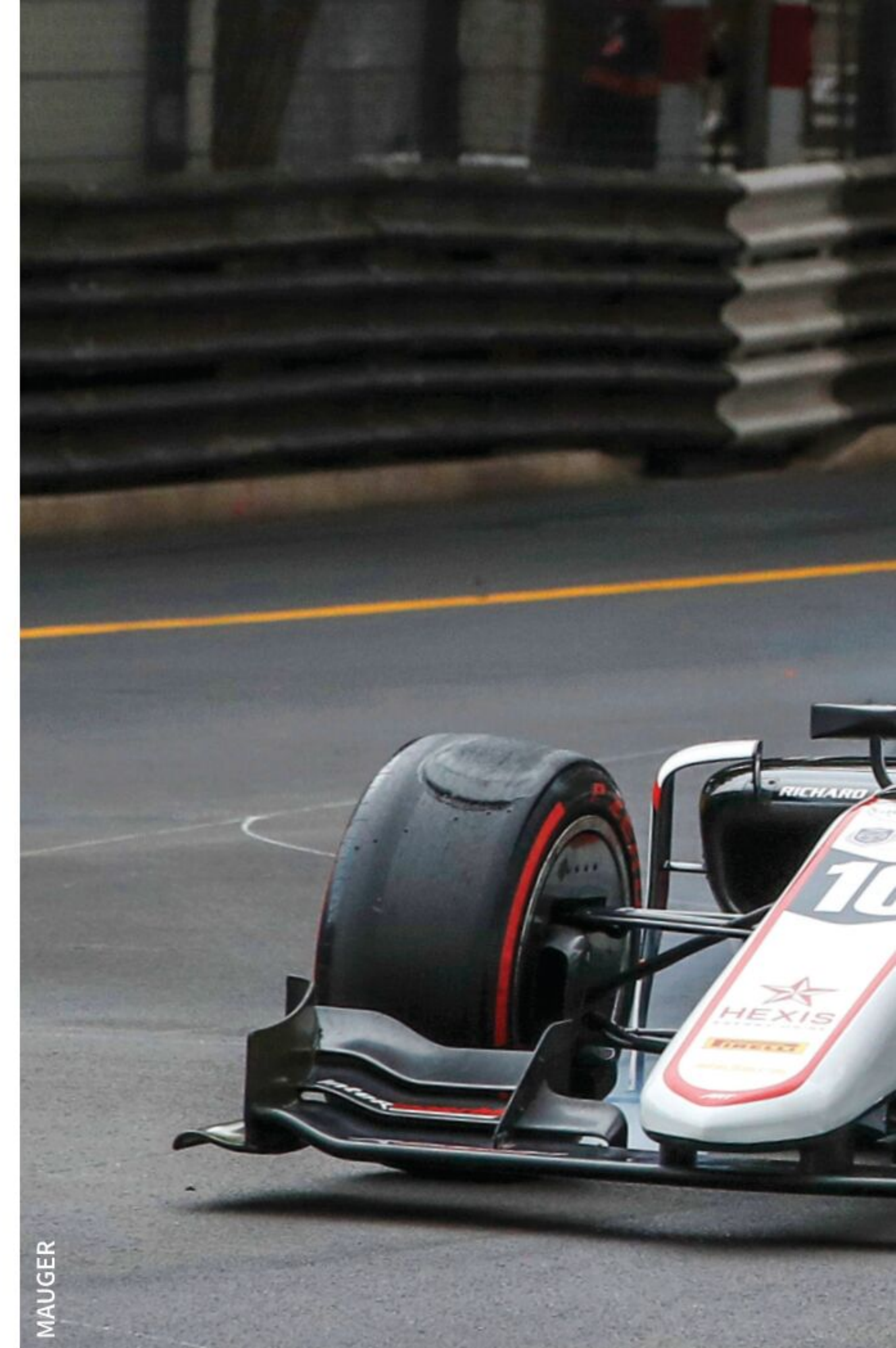
In doing so, the ART Grand Prix driver became the youngest ever polesitter and race winner in F2 history, taking that record away from McLaren F1 star Lando Norris.

"In Bahrain [the season opener] I was not fast to be honest and the weekend was difficult," said

Pourchaire in Monaco. "I just wanted to bounce back and do a good race weekend and be back on the podium, and I have become the youngest pole winner and race winner. I can't believe it.

"The race was so stressful I was under pressure. Monaco is unique, you cannot make a mistake here so I was so concentrated. We did the perfect race, it feels incredible."

The feature race victory, taken by 2.9 seconds ahead of champion-to-be Oscar Piastri, put Pourchaire on the radar of Formula 1 teams. He earned himself an F1 test with Alfa Romeo at the Hungaroring and was linked to a race seat for 2022 that eventually went to rival Guanyu Zhou.



Castroneves takes a special Indy 500 win

Indianapolis 500

The 40% crowd permitted to attend the Indianapolis 500 this year responded warmly to Helio Castroneves's triumph. How could they not? He put on one hell of a display in his fight with eventual IndyCar Series champion Alex Palou, made history by joining AJ Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears in the four-time winners' club, and climbed the fence to whip the crowd into a frenzy.

It was his first race in a part-time deal for the Meyer Shank Racing Honda team, and initially he didn't hold high hopes.

"I thought, 'What the heck am I doing here?!' The car was just so loose," recalls Castroneves. "Then on the Sunday practice after qualifying, we got our heads around the race set-up and I said, 'Yes, the car is in a good spot,' and on Carburetion Day on the next Friday I knew exactly what we had."

It came down to Palou, in just his second 500, to take on Castroneves, a veteran of 20 Indy 500s, for the victory. That experience disparity proved crucial in the closing stages.

"I have to say, he was driving very well," says the 46-year-old. "His only problem was that he didn't know what I had, but I knew what he had. I had learned before from battling with Ryan Hunter-Reay [in the 2014 Indy 500] not to show everything too soon. So when Alex was ahead of me, I was just waiting for the right opportunity to pass and stay there – and that's what happened, by using the backmarkers ahead of us in the right way, getting a tow but not losing downforce in their dirty air."

Four months after winning the Daytona 24 Hours, Castroneves was back on top of the world.





CHIVERS



Quality racing with class acts on top

Snetterton BTCC

It was at least an hour since the chequered flag had fallen on the final race of the day, and a balmy, sunny, mid-June day at Snetterton was heading towards evening. And still Tom Ingram stood there, adjacent to the podium, courteously giving his time to the media. “Sorry Tom, can you hang on for a few more minutes?” “Of course, I’m happy to stand here talking all night!” he quipped.

Members of the Excelr8 Motorsport team were still hovering in the background, beaming, drunk on happiness, because Ingram had just steered their Hyundai i30 N to victory – the team’s first in the British Touring Car Championship. Sure, it was the reversed-grid race, but he’d been the top points scorer of the weekend on only his second competition outing with the squad. That Hyundai was surely a competitive machine; it wasn’t a fluky luck-in such as the BTCC’s sporting regulations occasionally throw up.

And what made it so special was that this was the first time since late 2019 that the action-starved enthusiasts had been allowed back to the circuit to watch the series – well, 4000 of them anyway in that interim stage. What they saw was the three classiest, standout performers of the COVID-enforced TV-only era deliver magnificent drives to win the three races. First Colin Turkington, then an Ash Sutton charge, then Ingram.

It was one of those days when you simply feel blessed to be involved with this sport, such was the bonhomie. Somehow, the traditional delays on the A11 afterwards didn’t seem to matter – especially as Ingram was probably *still* chatting to media by the podium.



Battles of two F1 legends

Hungarian GP

A charging Lewis Hamilton recovering from a strategic disadvantage is usually a sight to behold – and difficult to stop. But Fernando Alonso showed that the seven-time world champion could be thwarted for a considerable time at the Hungarian GP.

Hamilton’s medium-tyred Mercedes arrived behind the hard-shod Alpine on lap 55 of 70. At that point Hamilton’s pace suggested he could catch the leading Alpine of Esteban Ocon, just 9s up the road, before the end. Alonso demonstrated all his racecraft to keep Hamilton back, positioning his car perfectly and staying ahead despite some quality attacks from the reigning champ.

Finally on lap 65, Alonso locked up into Turn 1 and ran wide enough to let Hamilton get a run, and he completed the pass on the blast to Turn 2. He was still 9.4s behind Ocon (the Frenchman providing another highlight with his staunch defence from Sebastian Vettel) at the end of that lap, and fell short by 2.7s at the flag. Alonso’s defence had been crucial to Ocon’s first F1 victory.

The overall championship fight between Hamilton and Max Verstappen was the undoubted story of the season, but none of the fights were as satisfying or as thrilling as this one, a rare reminder of what we missed while Alonso was toiling in mediocre machinery. >>



SUTTON



An outrageous gamble and incredible pass

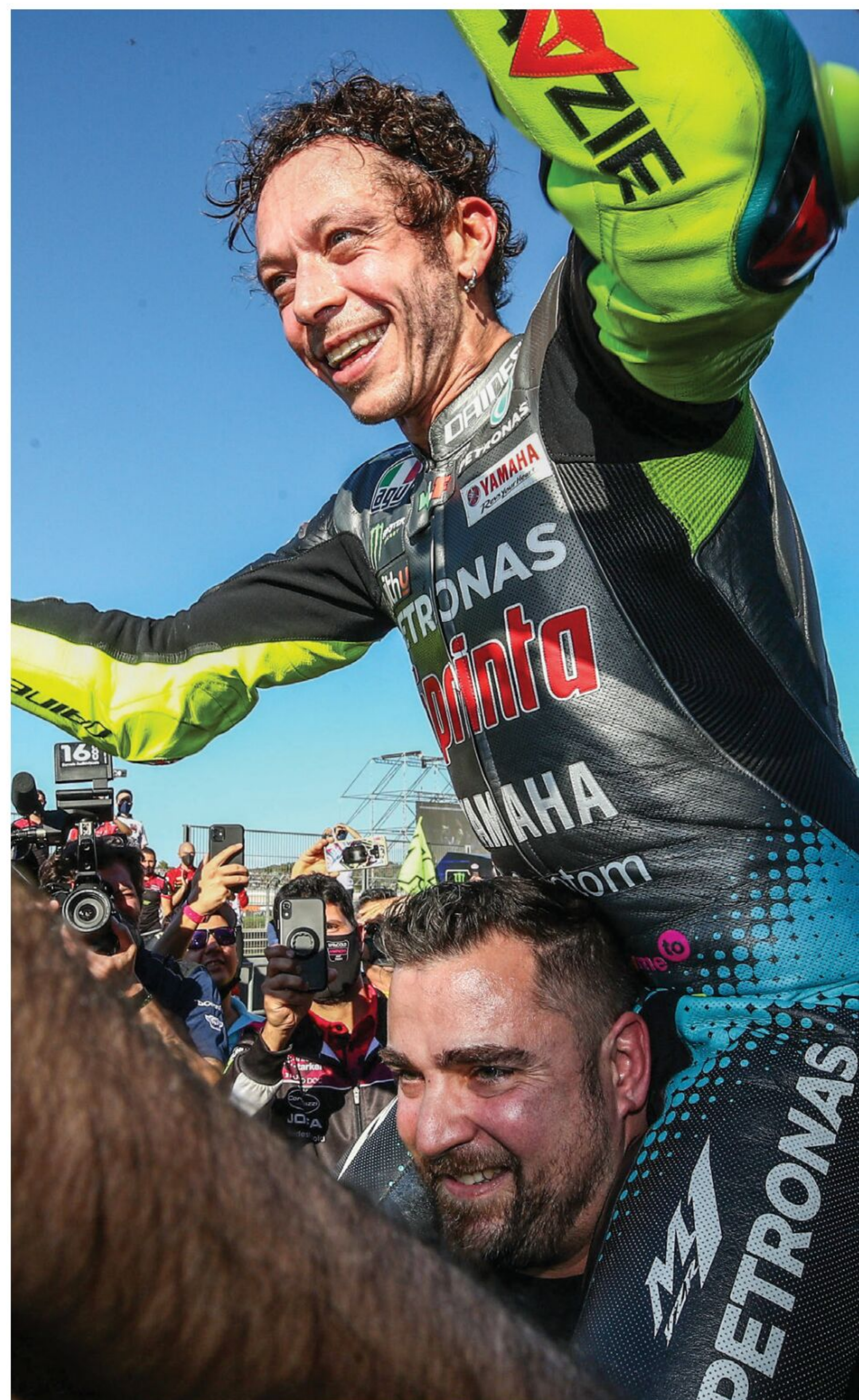
Spa 24 Hours

The Iron Lynx Ferrari looked home and dry with 60 minutes of the Spa 24 Hours to go. Then came one of the most preposterous gambles in motor racing history. The chasing WRT Audi squad opted to send the second-placed car out from its final pitstop a few minutes later onto a dry track shod on wet-weather tyres.

The black clouds gathering overhead left little doubt that it was going to rain. WRT's gamble hung on when it would happen. Its numbers came up when the drops started as Dries Vanthoor was beginning sector two on his out-lap. And it then looked like it had hit the jackpot when Alessandro Pier Guidi in the Ferrari stayed out a lap too long on slicks on a sodden track.

Now it was WRT's race to lose, only for the race to take a slightly more predictable turn. A safety car was inevitably called, and the Audi's one-minute advantage was all but wiped out.

Pier Guidi closed down the four-second gap once the green flags flew and, with 10 minutes remaining on the clock, pulled a move around the outside at Blanchimont to seal the win. It was an overtaking move befitting that dramatic final hour.



The closest finish in more ways than one

Le Mans 24 Hours

Anyone studying the timing screens in the final couple of minutes of the Le Mans 24 Hours was privy to one of the most amazing finishes in the rich history of the big race. Shame the TV director missed it: he'd lost interest in LMP2 after Yifei Ye had ground to a halt in the leading WRT ORECA early on the final lap, and focused instead on the slowing Toyotas.

Yet Tom Blomqvist was homing in on a struggling Robin Frijns in what was now the battle for LMP2 victory. A field bunching up behind the Toyotas provided another dimension to that dramatic last lap.

Blomqvist's Jota car was just under four seconds behind starting the final lap and gained a second in each of the first two sectors. The under-pressure Frijns had to dart in and out of the bunching pack in the second WRT ORECA as he strove to stay ahead.

What should have been his final jink from behind a Porsche left him confronted with a race official bearing the chequered flag. He needed another rapid steering input as he crossed the line just seven tenths in front. Breathtaking.





GOLDANDGOOSE



Rossi bids an emotional farewell

Valencia MotoGP

Valentino Rossi finally decided to call time on his MotoGP career at the end of this season, ending an era as one of the most recognisable and successful riders in history.

The Italian notched up 26 seasons (across 125cc, 250cc and 500cc/MotoGP), 432 grands prix, 115 victories and nine world titles before bowing out at the finale at Valencia after announcing his retirement during the summer.

While statistically 2021 will go down as Rossi's worst campaign, it will be remembered as his farewell tour. He leaves behind a legacy of his records and a pathway for future superstars through his VR46 academy and racing team.

A 10th-place finish in his final GP might not be remembered, but with of his proteges – Francesco Bagnaia – winning at Valencia, and fellow VR46 Academy graduates Franco Morbidelli and Rossi's half-brother Luca Marini also starring on the MotoGP grid, it suggests that the next chapter of Rossi's story is set to provide yet more success.

After Rossi was given the ultimate send-off by the MotoGP paddock by being presented with all of his world title-winning bikes, the 42-year-old admitted he was struck by the tributes dedicated to his career: "It was very emotional, great support and great respect from all the people in the paddock. It was a great weekend, I rode well and in the race I was able to arrive in the top 10. It means I close my long career as one of the top 10 riders in the world."

He'll be remembered as much more than that.



McKLEIN



Ogier signs off in style

Rally Monza

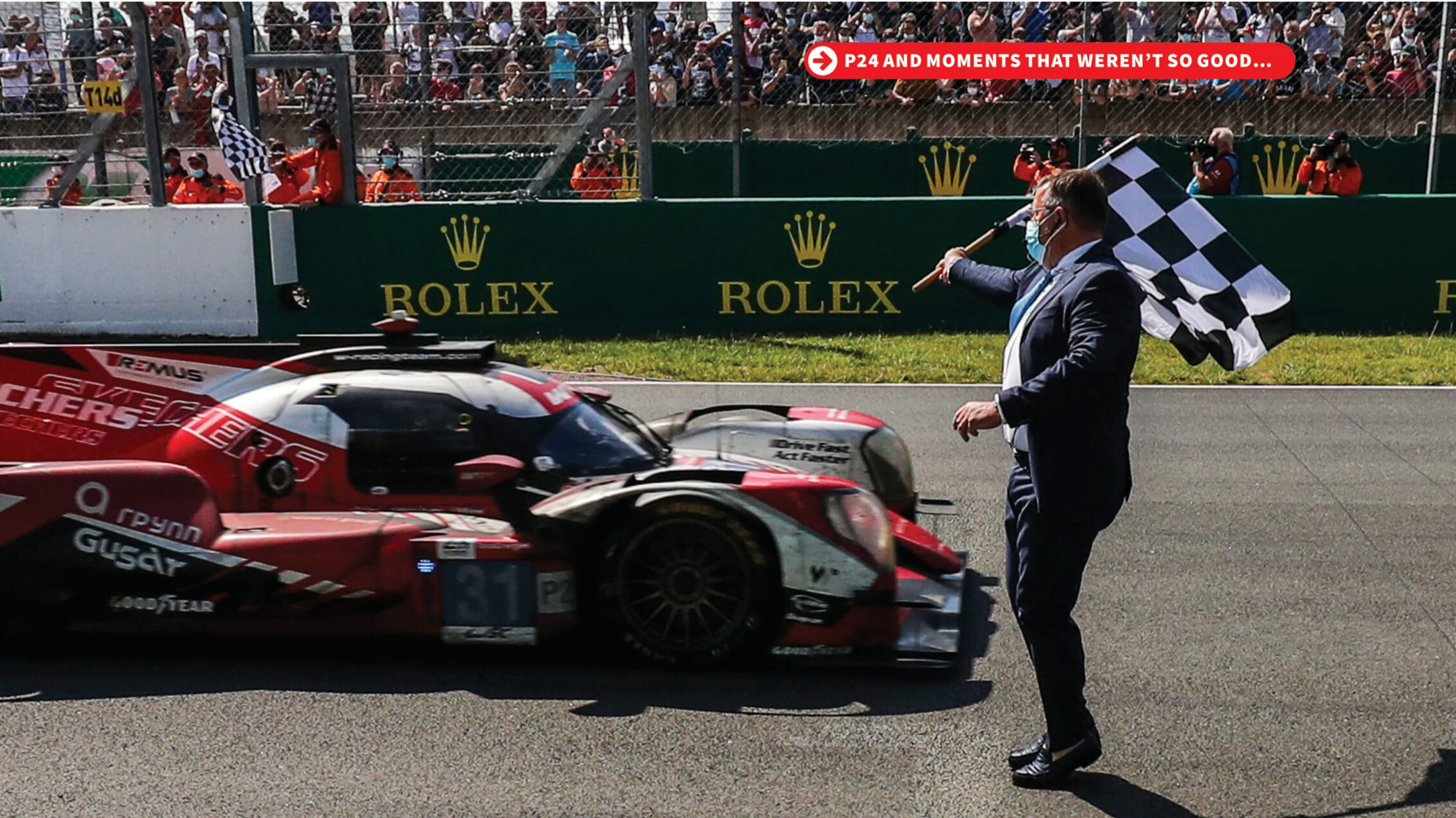
Elite athletes are rarely afforded the opportunity to bow out on a high, but that wasn't the case for rally legend Sebastien Ogier in his final event as a full-time World Rally Championship driver. Ogier lifted an eighth WRC crown in style with victory on Rally Monza, which will be remembered as a modern classic.

This was a title showdown between Toyota team-mates Ogier and Elfyn Evans. While Ogier was in the box seat courtesy of a 17-point lead, a slip-up could hand Evans a maiden title and the Frenchman's glittering full-time career a damp-squib finish.

What eventuated was one of the finest duels to grace the WRC, with Ogier and Evans going toe to toe for three days and the lead changing hands six times.

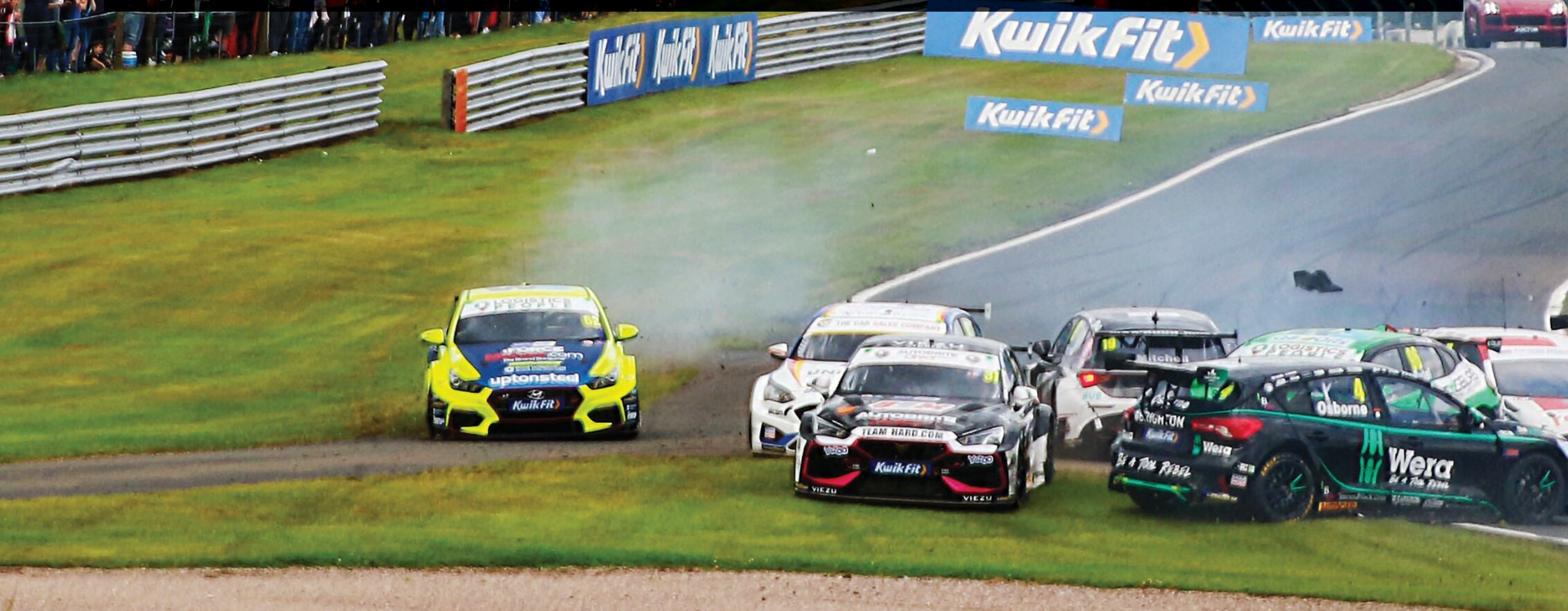
Heading into the final day, only 0.5 seconds separated the pair as Evans threw everything at Ogier. It almost worked – Ogier clipped a concrete barrier on Monza's historic banking, but luckily it failed to halt his charge.

In the end, a mistake from Evans handed Ogier a 7.3s win that secured him an eighth world title. The cool Frenchman allowed his emotions to pour out as he and co-driver Julien Ingrassia climbed on top of their Yaris to celebrate another title, and their glittering 16-year partnership drew to a close. >>



P24 AND MOMENTS THAT WEREN'T SO GOOD...

AND MOMENTS THAT *WEREN'T* SO GOOD...



Battery racers run out of juice

Valencia Formula E

Range anxiety remains one of the biggest hesitations around electric cars. Motorsport, as a development testbed, has a role to play in dispelling those concerns. Instead, Formula E put it front and centre at Valencia in April. And to boot, the FIA dragged its popular reigning champion under the bus while the official communications left much to be desired.

A flurry of safety cars at a slippery Circuit Ricardo Tormo, hosting the first Formula E race on a permanent circuit, led to 19 of the 52kWh of useable energy being deducted to ensure that the savings under neutralised conditions didn't create a flat-out sprint.

But at the final safety car restart, race leader Antonio Felix da Costa crossed the line with 15s on the timer to create an unexpected extra lap.

This meant almost the entire field ran out of accessible battery. Just six of the 24 cars finished at anything like racing speed.

The championship was quick to declare it a showcase of "energy management" in a clumsy statement — although in a move of damage limitation, an even more questionable second paragraph was redacted. But Nico Muller, ranking second, had been 22nd at the start. Third-placed Stoffel Vandoorne lined up 24th. They had not pulled off strategy masterclasses, rather lucked into unlikely podiums. The FIA then threw the blame on da Costa.

For how events unfolded and were then communicated, this was the championship's nadir. But the perverse side-effect was that the following day's race drew one of the biggest TV audiences of the year. One of very few upsides from a sorry chapter.



A title clash and Mercedes orders

Norisring DTM

The new-look DTM delivered plenty of exciting moments in 2021, but it's the controversy at the Norisring finale that will be remembered for years to come.

It all kicked off seconds after the race began when Audi star Kelvin van der Linde attempted an audacious divebomb on runaway championship leader Liam Lawson into the first braking zone, leaving the Red Bull protege at the bottom of the pack with a severely hobbled Ferrari.

But that wasn't all. With just a handful of laps to run in the finale, Mercedes orchestrated a shock reshuffle at the front of the field, asking both Lucas Auer and Philip Ellis to slow down to make way for its top prospect Maximilian Gotz.

All of this meant the pendulum suddenly swung towards a driver who had been barely clinging on to his title hopes before the race, while the man who had been set to clinch the championship in his rookie campaign was left to watch on helplessly as the situation slipped out of his control.

Unsurprisingly, the reaction to the finale was far from pleasant, with the DTM's own bosses forced to admit that it had caused a storm on social media. A statement from Gerhard Berger followed a few days later, promising fairer regulations in 2022 to avoid the Norisring fiasco that overshadowed the start of the series' new era.

All in all, it was a reminder that the DTM hasn't really changed all that much in its new GT3 form. The cars may be different and half the grid might be composed of newcomers, but the manufacturers are still willing to go to any lengths to justify their investment in the series... >>



Chaos and bad luck in Cheshire

Oulton Park BTCC

Oulton Park is a magnificent drivers' circuit, but this time didn't lend itself to the driving in the TOCA package, from the British Touring Car Championship down.

Large fields of equally matched (or, in the case of all the support series, identical) machinery mean racing is hard. At circuits such as Silverstone or Snetterton, there's room to recover from incidents; at Oulton, not so.

It wasn't as if anyone was dishing out blatant dirty driving, more that the current era – including improvements in safety – can encourage a blithe, even reckless, disregard for consequences of ill-thought-out manoeuvres. Time after time there were accidents, safety

cars and red flags, and it was a poor show for the traditional large Cheshire crowd, who poured in post-COVID. Leading BTCC protagonists Ash Sutton and Colin Turkington both found themselves as pinballs as the series' top contenders all had a day to forget.

Even without that, it was a trying weekend for your faithful Autosport rep. An email barely 12 hours before setting off advised that a hotel flood meant accommodation had been shifted from nearby Nantwich to a business hotel just off the campus of far-away Keele University. Then a pre-departure traffic check on Sunday evening revealed part of the M6 was shut. Anyone living south of Stoke was therefore forced into an exhausting Midlands zigzag to get home!



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Not a fitting finish for GTE Pro

Bahrain 8 Hours

If you believe all publicity is good publicity, then the final 11 minutes of the Bahrain finale and the acrimony that followed were positive for the World Endurance Championship. But if you reckon, like Autosport, that international motor races should be run to a coherent set of regulations, then it was a stain on the series that will take some time to wash out.

It wasn't the punt from behind settling the destination of the GTE Pro title that provided the blemish, rather the reaction of those ensconced in the race control building. The call for Ferrari driver Alessandro Pier Guidi to give back the position to Porsche's Michael Christensen was unusual if not unprecedented, its origin uncertain, and its reversal unrevealed to the wider world over the final minutes.

It was no way for such a close-fought race to be decided, and it was no way to settle a championship.



Startline shunt leaves racers in

Jeddah FIA Formula 2

Beyond the truncated calendar and confusing three-race format, the Formula 2 lowlight was a frightening startline crash in what would become a significantly shortened Jeddah feature race.

It had already been heavily delayed by barrier damage incurred in an earlier support race. Once racing did begin it lasted mere moments – Theo Pourchaire stalled on the grid and was collected by an unsighted Enzo Fittipaldi, triggering a horrific shunt. Both were conscious before being transferred by ambulance and helicopter to hospital.





F1 rivals hit while not racing

Saudi Arabian GP

The 2021 season was one of the most dramatic in F1 history, for both good and bad reasons. On the negative side, handing out points for the non-race at Spa was ludicrous, and the controversial safety car decisions in the Abu Dhabi finale will be debated for years.

The inaugural Saudi Arabian GP distilled all of the campaign's issues into one race. Track-limits debates, contact, red flags, safety cars and some bizarre race direction were all present, but perhaps the naughtiest moment of all was when Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton contrived to hit each other when they weren't even really racing.

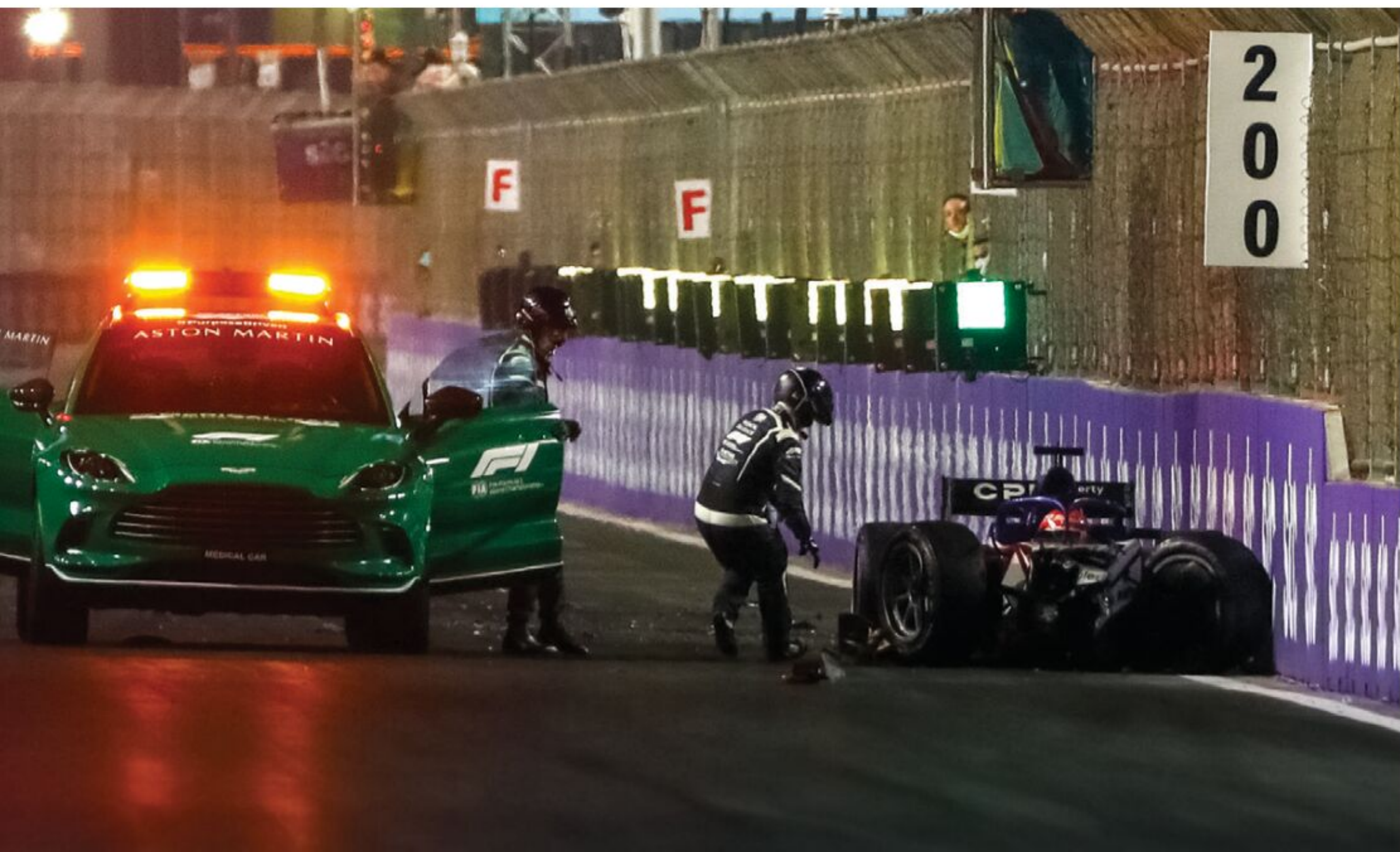
Verstappen had been told to hand the lead back for a previous misdemeanour and slowed. Hamilton didn't know what was happening and was wary of the Red Bull allowing him past just before a DRS zone, where there would be the threat of an immediate repass. So he slowed too. Unfathomably, he chose to sit directly behind Verstappen, who even more confusingly then hit the brakes.

Hamilton tried to avoid the Red Bull, but contact was made, although both cars were able to continue. Verstappen was later penalised and Hamilton won the race, but the two best drivers in the world making contact while trying to drive slower than each other did not make for edifying viewing, particularly in the context of the shambles all around them.

hospital as F2 crashes into Jeddah

Incredibly, Pourchaire emerged unscathed from the incident, while Fittipaldi suffered a fractured heel along with cuts and bruises, which would curtail the remainder of the Brazilian's season.

The race was red-flagged and eventually went ahead after a lengthy delay, having been shortened to 20 minutes. Prema Racing's Oscar Piastri took the victory only after the race was red-flagged again due to another crash, this time involving Olli Caldwell and Guilherme Samaia, with eight minutes of running completed. As a result, only half points were awarded.

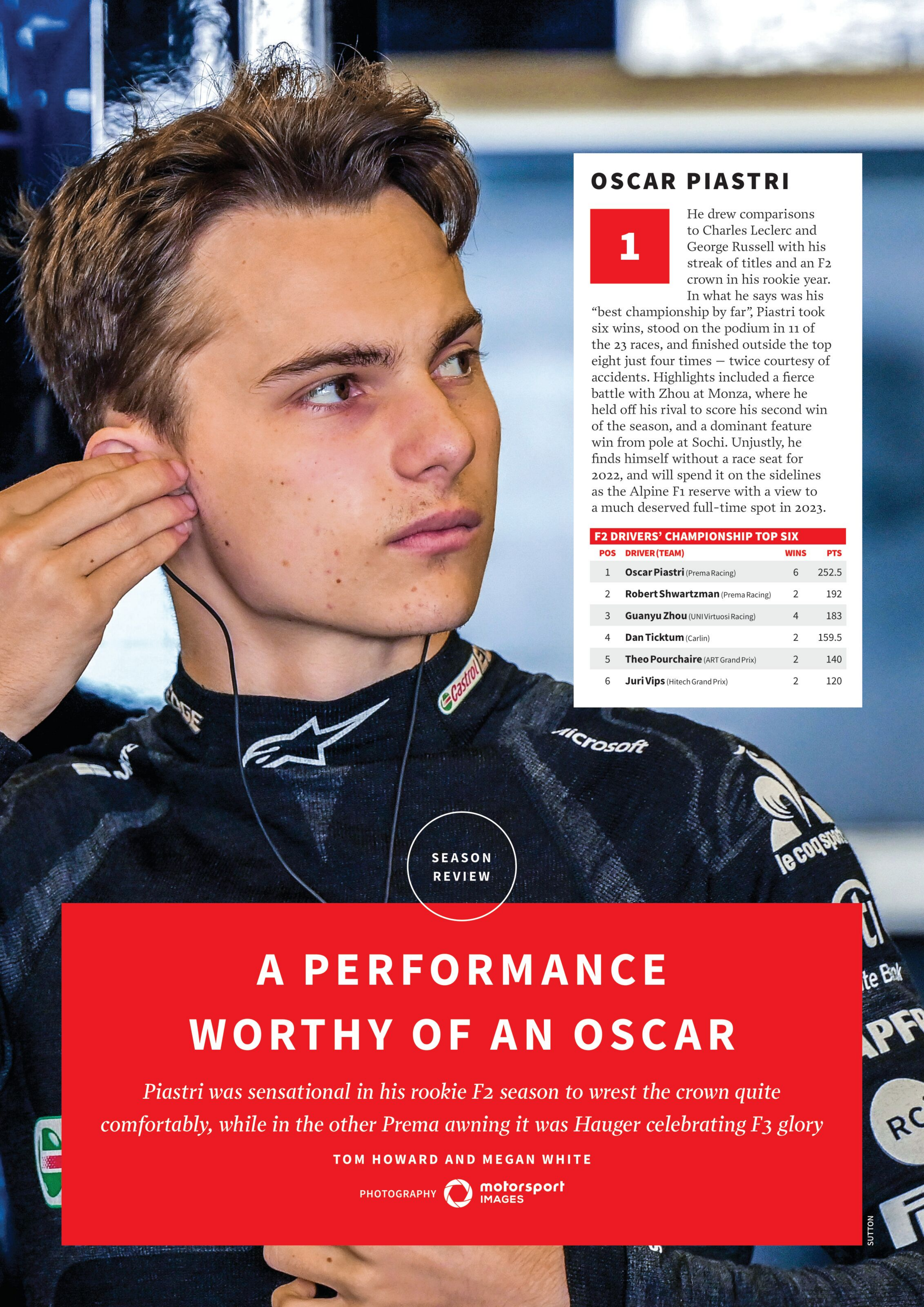




WANT MORE THAN F1?

OUR JOURNALISTS COVER ALL MAJOR SERIES





OSCAR PIASTRI

1 He drew comparisons to Charles Leclerc and George Russell with his streak of titles and an F2 crown in his rookie year. In what he says was his “best championship by far”, Piastri took six wins, stood on the podium in 11 of the 23 races, and finished outside the top eight just four times – twice courtesy of accidents. Highlights included a fierce battle with Zhou at Monza, where he held off his rival to score his second win of the season, and a dominant feature win from pole at Sochi. Unjustly, he finds himself without a race seat for 2022, and will spend it on the sidelines as the Alpine F1 reserve with a view to a much deserved full-time spot in 2023.

F2 DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP TOP SIX			
POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	WINS	PTS
1	Oscar Piastri (Prema Racing)	6	252.5
2	Robert Shwartzman (Prema Racing)	2	192
3	Guanyu Zhou (UNI Virtuosi Racing)	4	183
4	Dan Ticktum (Carlin)	2	159.5
5	Theo Pourchaire (ART Grand Prix)	2	140
6	Juri Vips (Hitech Grand Prix)	2	120

SEASON
REVIEW

A PERFORMANCE WORTHY OF AN OSCAR

Piastri was sensational in his rookie F2 season to wrest the crown quite comfortably, while in the other Prema awning it was Hauger celebrating F3 glory

TOM HOWARD AND MEGAN WHITE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

DENNIS HAUGER

2

The Red Bull junior's move to Prema for 2021 was transformative for his second F3 season. Hauger proved himself with superb lights-to-flag victories, including a masterclass in the feature race of the season opener at Barcelona, and as a driver who can charge through the pack when necessary, as demonstrated in both Austrian sprint races – he started each from 12th, and claimed a win and a third. He confidently asserted his dominance over team-mates Olli Caldwell and Arthur Leclerc (who ended up eighth and 10th respectively). He is expected to race in F2 next season, although his seat hasn't yet been confirmed.

F3 DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP TOP SIX			
POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	WINS	PTS
1	Dennis Hauger (Prema Racing)	4	205
2	Jack Doohan (Trident)	4	179
3	Clement Novalak (Trident)	0	147
4	Frederik Vesti (ART Grand Prix)	1	138
5	Victor Martins (MP Motorsport)	1	131
6	Alex Smolyar (ART Grand Prix)	2	107



ROZENDAAL/DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY

GUANYU ZHOU

3

He was under pressure to perform in his third F2 season, and this he did, quickly emerging as a genuine title contender with Virtuosi from the outset. Indeed, he led the championship across the first three events, with two wins and a further two podiums across the first nine races. But just as fellow Alpine Academy driver Piastri was finding his feet, Zhou suffered a dip in form that would prove costly. A pair of seconds at Monza kept him in contention, but a run of six races without a top-five result left him adrift in the title race and under threat from Shwartzman, who snatched the overall runner-up spot in the championship. His pace over one lap and in races was there, along with slick racecraft, but there were too many errors to secure the title.



SUTTON

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4**JACK DOOHAN**

He equalled Hauger's four wins in F3, and was a well-deserved runner-up after showing incredible pace throughout his title challenge with Trident. Doohan started the season well, with second in the first feature race at Barcelona, before winning the second at Paul Ricard from fourth on the grid. He scored a podium apiece at the Red Bull Ring and in Hungary, before a standout weekend at Spa, where he took his first series pole and won the second sprint race and the feature. At this point he was just 25 points adrift of Hauger, but a podium-free Zandvoort left him with a mountain to climb at the Sochi finale. Here, he won the feature race, and joins Virtuosi to race in F2 next year.



SUTTON

5**ROBERT SHWARTZMAN**

Improved upon his fourth place in 2020 to finish runner-up in the F2 standings to team-mate Piastri. He was tied in a season-long tussle with Zhou for the position, before a series of solid performances in the final two rounds moved him ahead. After a somewhat wobbly start to the season, the Ferrari protege led every lap to take his first victory of the year in a Baku sprint, and he drove from fourth on the grid to secure his second next time out at Silverstone. Consistency was key, with Schwartzman failing to score in just three of the 23 races and rarely outside the top five. Won't return to F2 next year, but his impressive performance for Haas at the F1 post-season test in Abu Dhabi caught the eye.

F2: PIASTRI MEANS IT'S AUSSIE RULES

GALLOWAY

Piastri leads Prema
Racing team-mate
Schwartzman in Bahrain

Oscar Piastri knew a Formula 2 title shot was on after winning the second race of the season in Bahrain, but his run to the title wasn't quite that simple. The Australian, in his rookie season, would face a stern challenge from third-year F2 racer Guanyu Zhou, who came out of the blocks quickly.

For this year F2 operated a new three-race weekend format, comprising two reversed-grid sprint races followed by a feature race on Sunday. And it was Virtuosi Racing runner Zhou who claimed the first pole in Bahrain and backed that up by scoring the big points on Sunday. The Chinese racer therefore headed the standings, and continued to do so after the following rounds in Monaco and Baku. He picked up his second win (a sprint) in Monaco, while Prema Racing recruit Piastri showcased impressive consistency, scoring three second-place finishes across the Monaco and Baku weekends.

Zhou was five points ahead of Piastri heading into round four at Silverstone, but the Aussie left Great Britain with a five-point advantage despite Zhou claiming a third win in the feature race. Non-scores in the two sprint races for Zhou compared to his Prema rival's sixth, fourth and third across the weekend had turned the tables. Silverstone was also the weekend when Piastri unlocked his one-lap pace. He scored a maiden pole position, and would repeat that in qualifying for the remaining four events. Furthermore, he beat Zhou to the feature-race win at Monza.

As Zhou's charge began to falter, Piastri grew stronger and added feature-race wins at the final three rounds at Sochi, Jeddah and Yas Marina. An additional sprint-race success in Jeddah for Piastri put the title realistically beyond reach of his team-mate Robert Schwartzman, who rose to runner-up spot after finishing in the top five in each of the last eight races. Zhou ended the year on a high with a fourth win (a sprint) in Abu Dhabi to finish third overall. A fine Piastri drive from 10th to third in the first race at the finale had sealed his third consecutive junior single-seater title.

TOM HOWARD

Zhou lost his points
lead to Piastri at
Silverstone

SUTTON

FILIPPE/DPPI

THEO POURCHAIRE

6

Placed himself on the radar of F1 teams with an impressive display to finish fifth in the F2 points with ART, despite breaking his arm in Baku. Aged just 17,

he became F2's youngest ever polesitter and race winner in a magnificent maiden appearance on the famous Monaco streets. Highly rated by Alfa Romeo F1 boss and ART founder Frederic Vasseur, Sauber junior Pourchaire even emerged as a candidate for the Alfa seat that eventually went to Zhou. His only other victory came in a Monza sprint. The speed was definitely there and a consistent run of podiums could easily have thrown him into the title mix, but he was also unlucky to be caught up in incidents.



SBLOXHAM

DAN TICKTUM

7

After a rookie F2 season with DAMS, he returned to familiar territory with Carlin for 2021, scoring two wins and five further podiums to finish fourth

in the standings. Although marred by a "beyond ridiculous" penalty for causing a collision in Baku, and his drop from Williams's junior academy, his season was consistently strong. A standout performance came in Sochi, where Ticktum made the most of his sprint race pole to withstand heavy pressure for victory, while a gamble on pit strategy followed by a fight through the field in the Monza feature race helped him to third. He could have claimed a third win if not for a slow pitstop and VSC in Bahrain. He now heads to Formula E.



VICTOR MARTINS

8

As the reigning Formula Renault Eurocup champion entering his

F3 rookie season with MP Motorsport, he secured fifth in the standings and was best of the newcomers. Martins scored his first F3 win at Zandvoort with a convincing charge from fifth on the grid, and had five more podiums in a year in which he rejoined the Alpine Academy. The Frenchman began the season brightly by qualifying third for the opening two rounds, and claiming sprint-race seconds at each. With a third place to boot, this put him an early second in the standings. He struggled mid-season, before his Dutch bounceback and a solid haul in Sochi, and could be a worthy F3 title contender next year.

SUTTON

**9****JURI VIPS**

With two wins and four extra podiums, the Hitech-run Red Bull junior perhaps deserved to finish higher than sixth in the F2 standings, with a run of bad luck at the end of the season thwarting his efforts. After a tricky start to the season in Bahrain, he hit his stride in Monaco, where he took 22 points, before his standout weekend in Baku, scoring wins in the second sprint race and Sunday feature in brilliant style. After a second place in a Silverstone sprint, he struggled to the end of the season, with mechanical issues forcing his retirement in Sochi's feature race and tangles in the Jeddah and Abu Dhabi sprint races.

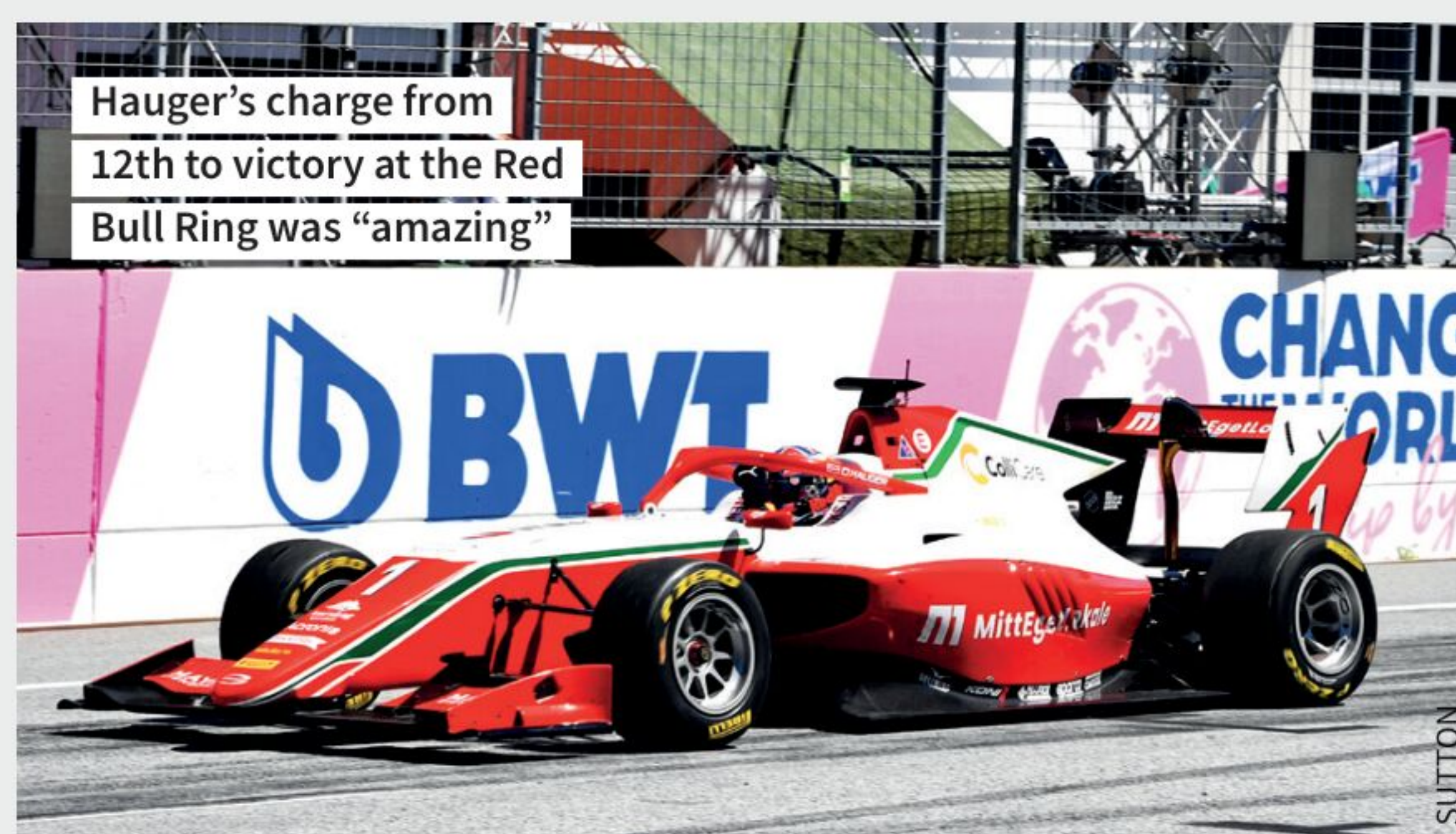
**CLEMENT NOVALAK****10**

Was much improved on his move from Carlin to Trident for the 2021 F3 season, and finished third in the standings. Never won a race, but finished second three times, once in the Zandvoort feature race and twice in sprints. Although he missed out on victory, Novalak put in several impressive performances, including charging from 11th to fourth at Barcelona. A tussle for the lead during the first sprint race in Austria resulted in retirement and sent him to the back of the grid for the sequel, where he charged back to 13th. Moved up to F2 with MP Motorsport for the final two rounds of that series' season, ahead of a full campaign in 2022.

F3: HAUGER ON TOP BUT RIVAL'S DOOHAN WELL

Dennis Hauger led the FIA Formula 3 Championship all the way from the opening round at Barcelona. With a haul of four wins and five additional podiums, the Norwegian bounced back from a difficult rookie F3 season in 2020. For 2021 he joined Prema Racing, regained his confidence and followed up his Italian Formula 4 crown of 2019 with another championship title.

The Red Bull junior snatched pole for the opener supporting the Spanish Grand Prix, and produced a lights-to-flag masterclass in the feature race, earning a 34-point haul to start the year as he meant to go on. Two second-place finishes followed at Paul Ricard, where he narrowly missed out to season-long title rival Jack



Dooohan in the feature race.

By the end of the third round at the Red Bull Ring, Hauger had already extended his lead to over 40 points. He finished on the podium in all three races in Austria, including a victory from 12th on the grid in the first sprint. He took another win in the Hungarian feature race,

swooping past team-mate Arthur Leclerc around the outside at Turn 3 in another stunning performance.

Spa was a less successful weekend for Hauger, with his highest result of the weekend an eighth in an unusually poor showing for Prema. But he bounced back at Zandvoort,

where he led the feature race all the way to boost his championship lead to 43 points, and all but seal the title with just one round remaining.

Hauger was crowned champion after the first race of the Sochi finale, with no points for Trident racer Dooohan enough to secure the title.

"If I had to pick the highlights of the year, taking pole and victory in the first race at Barcelona was special because it gave me a good start and a confidence boost," says Hauger. "Coming from P12 to P1 at the Red Bull Ring was also amazing."

Team boss Rene Rosin said Hauger did a "remarkable job", praising his consistency and ability to "always maximise the points".

MEGAN WHITE

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

From trackside to pitlane and special stage, our photographers captured images that told their own story. Here's our pick from an action-filled season

COMPILED BY PETER HODGES





motorsport
IMAGES

HONE

At the Italian GP, the Lewis Hamilton/Max Verstappen rivalry was dialled up another notch. It didn't end well





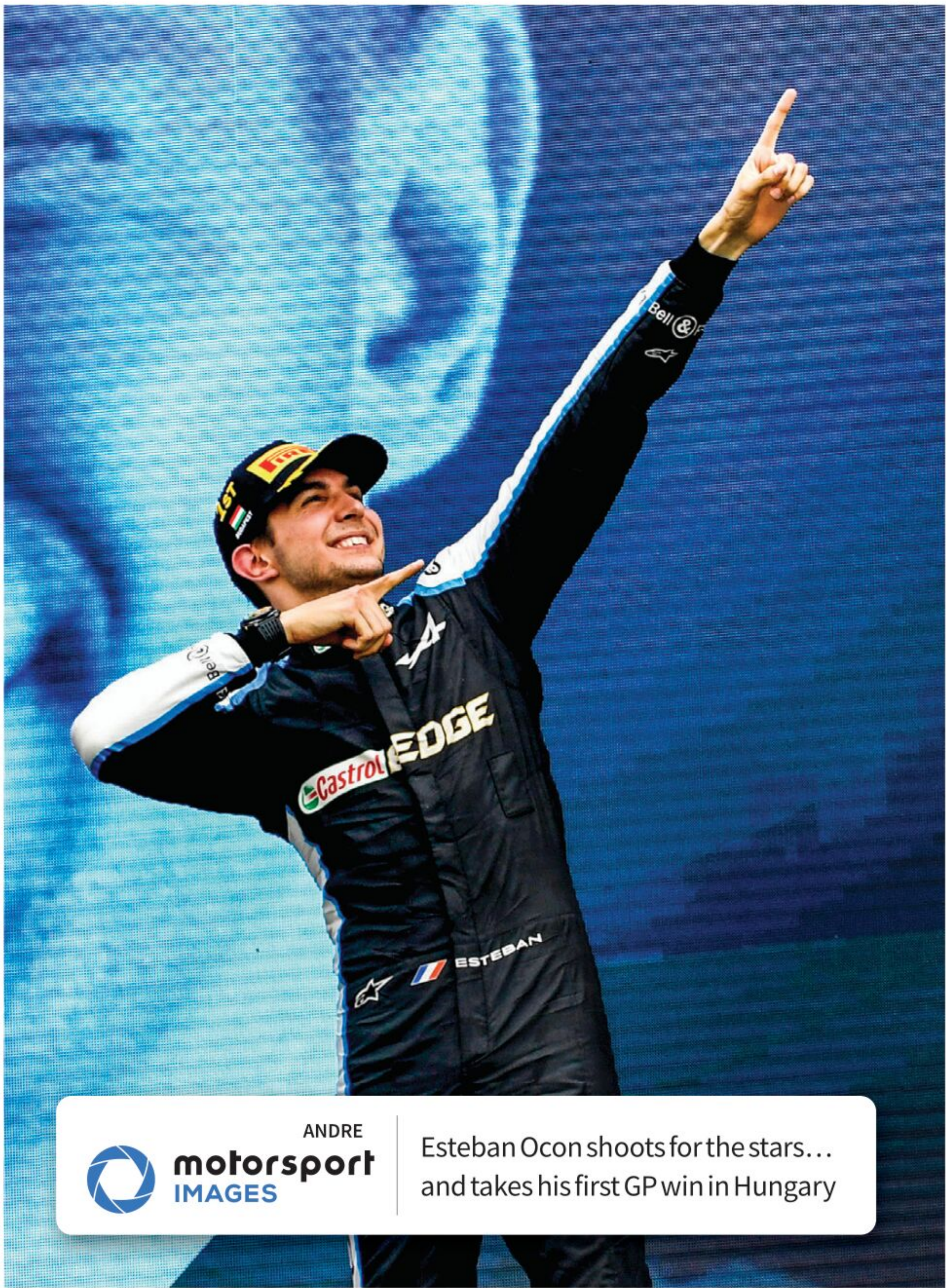
LEVITT
motorsport
IMAGES

A disagreement on the IndyCar
direction of traffic at Mid-Ohio



Eyes on the prize: Craig Breen's
focus and determination bagged
him a full-time WRC seat for 2022

McKLEIN



ANDRE
motorsport
IMAGES

Esteban Ocon shoots for the stars...
and takes his first GP win in Hungary



Valentino Rossi in full flight in the Portuguese GP at Portimao





Toyota's Kazuki Nakajima joyfully accepts a soaking for his part in victory in the 8 Hours of Bahrain in his farewell race

HOYER/JEP



Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr vaults from 10th on the grid to a fifth-place finish in the Austrian GP





GALLOWAY
motorsport
IMAGES

Alexander Sims, Pascal Wehrlein and Rene Rast stake their claim into Ste Devote at the Monaco E-Prix







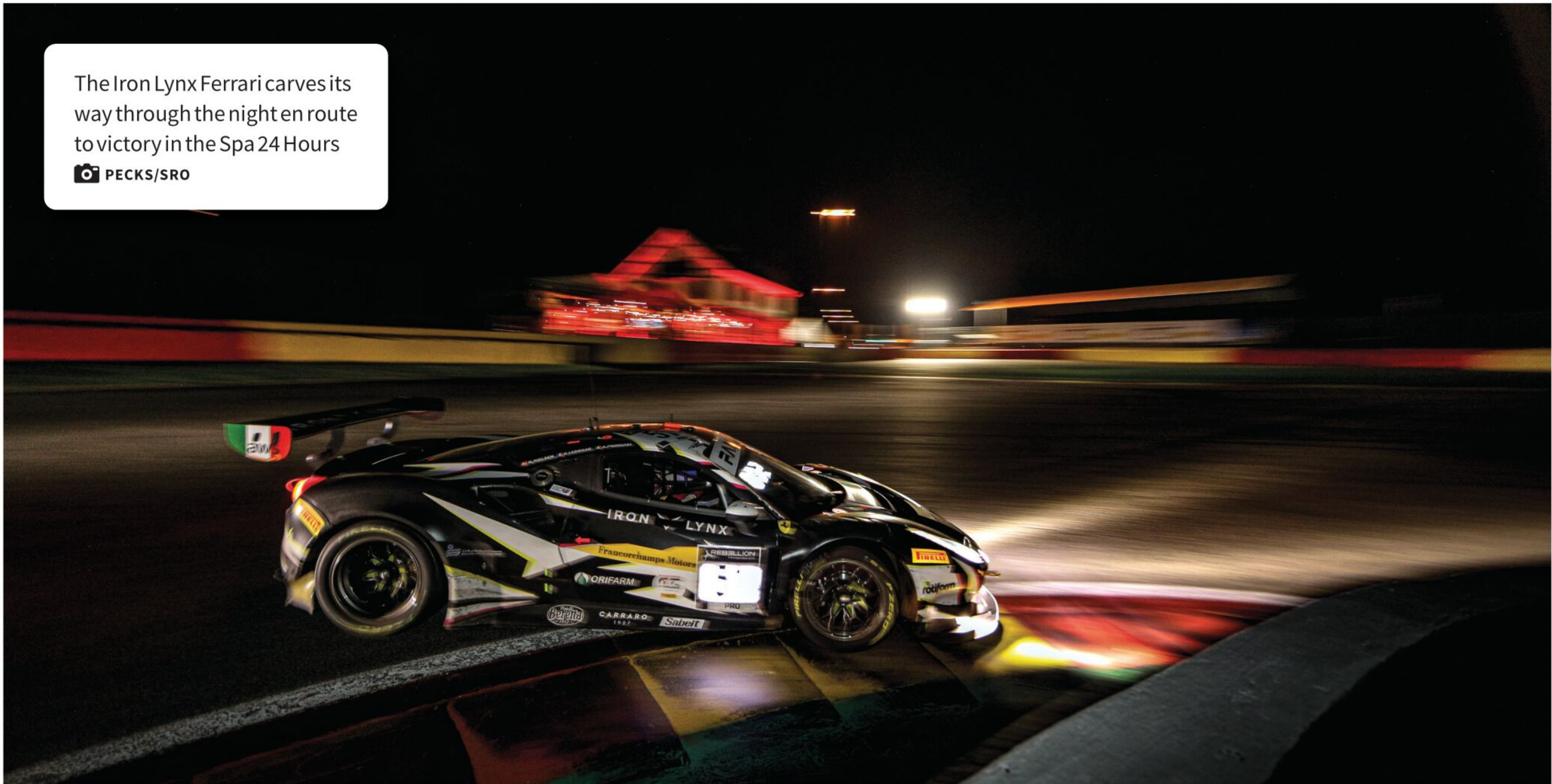
The Safari's long-awaited return to the World Rally Championship was as spectacular as it was challenging, as Hyundai's Dani Sordo can attest

 MCKLEIN

PICS OF THE YEAR

The Iron Lynx Ferrari carves its way through the night en route to victory in the Spa 24 Hours

PECKS/SRO



HORSBURGH
motorsport
IMAGES

Supercars superstar Shane van Gisbergen blasts to a three-race clean sweep at Sandown





MAUGER
motorsport
IMAGES

Despite Daniel Ricciardo's best efforts in Turkey, he never made it beyond Q1



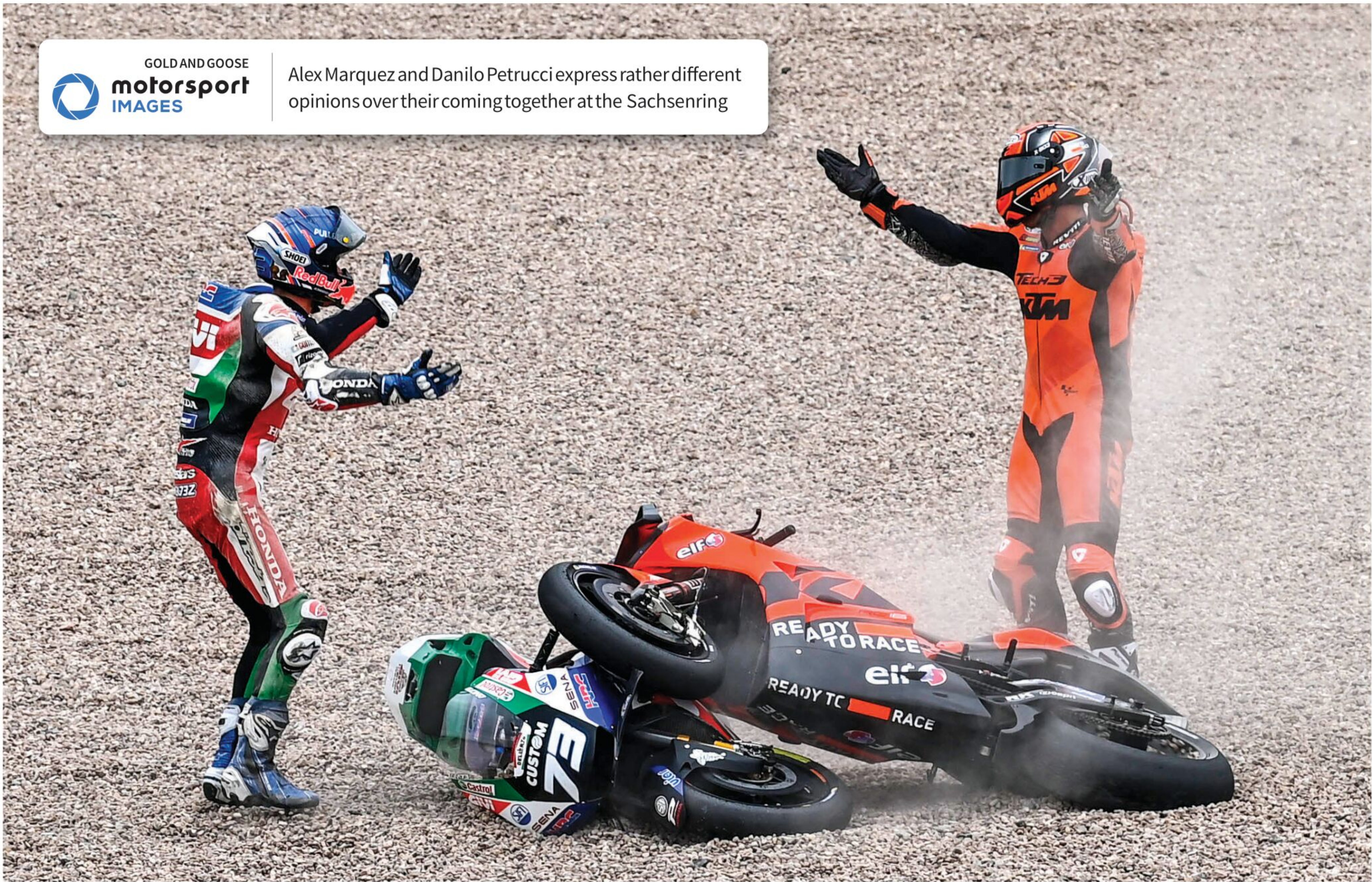
The late-afternoon sun makes a brief but glorious breakthrough to illuminate the battle-worn BTCC pack, lined up in the Silverstone pitlane after race three

EBREY/JEP



LEVITT
motorsport
IMAGES

Rubbin' is racin' – and then some. NASCARXfinity champion Daniel Hemric's Toyota bears the rubber scars from a close encounter at Phoenix



GOLD AND GOOSE
motorsport
IMAGES

Alex Marquez and Danilo Petrucci express rather different opinions over their coming together at the Sachsenring

Kalle Rovvanpera threads his Toyota Yaris between the trees in Estonia to become the WRC's youngest rally winner

McKLEIN





HONE
motorsport
IMAGES

Flag day: Lewis Hamilton savours his victory in the British Grand Prix



Four-time World RX champion Johan Kristoffersson's Audi S1 leads the charge at Montalegre in Portugal

RED BULL

The #7 Toyota finally got the win it deserved in the Le Mans 24 Hours, leading home its sister car – but it certainly wasn't plain sailing

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING



SEASON
REVIEW

WORLD OF SPORT

In and around further calendar disruption, there was nothing to separate the points leaders in World Rallycross, controversy reigned in the DTM, and Belgium's crack endurance team dominated the European GT scene

Ehrlacher beats the pretenders to his throne

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP

'Unpredictable' was the key word in the World Touring Car Cup. For one thing, the pandemic again enforced a calendar shake-up as series organiser Eurosport Events scrubbed the Asian leg in favour of more European venues. That did mean fresh circuits for the WTCR regulars, with Pau-Arnos – France's version of Cadwell Park – the most surprising addition. Was it really up to scratch for a series carrying FIA 'world' status? The teams doubted it. But the place has buckets of charm, plenty of jeopardy and inspired pretty good racing. Might be a lesson in there.

Twelve victors from 16 races and no one winning more than twice highlights how tough the WTCR continues to be, thanks to compensation weight and Balance of Performance. Inevitably, it means someone is always unhappy. But again Cyan Racing flattened the troughs of performance better than its rivals with its Lynk & Co 03s, and Yann Ehrlacher won his second consecutive



Ehrlacher kept hold of the crown with his second title on the spin



Rivals applauded legend Tarquini as he bowed out in Russian season finale

WTCR title. Still just 25, Ehrlacher has everything going for him to match and surpass his illustrious uncle Yvan Muller, who at 52 continued to be a force. The four-time World Touring Car Champion didn't win a race but finished fourth in the points and, just like last season, dedicated himself to his beloved nephew's cause.

Cyan plays the team game better than the other four-car squads from Hyundai, Audi, Honda and Cupra, which eased Ehrlacher's path to the second crown. But it was his own calm consistency, scoring points in every race, that really made the difference. Unlike last year, when he led from the first weekend, it took him until the halfway point at the Hungaroring to hit the top. Lynk & Co team-mate Santiago Urrutia won there and was only two points behind at this stage, creating an intriguing little problem for Cyan to manage. But a poor weekend at the Czech Republic's Most circuit next

time out left the Uruguayan trailing.

Such inconsistencies also undermined Ehrlacher's other main challengers. Jean-Karl Vernay, in his first season at BRC Hyundai and in the new Elantra N TCR, won in the first round at the Nurburgring Nordschleife and headed the standings until Hungary, where he endured a disaster on a weekend when he was doubling up in the electric Pure ETCR series. The French ace looks like a future WTCR champion, but similarly to the other title contenders – Comtoyou Audi's Frederic Vervisch, Urrutia and Munnich Motorsport Honda's Esteban Guerrieri – he'll need to 'do an Ehrlacher' to deliver on that potential.

Last words to Gabriele Tarquini. The 59-year-old called time on his wonderful career, adding a reversed-grid race win at Motorland Aragon before he did so. The tin-top legend will be sorely missed.

DAMIEN SMITH

Injured van Gisbergen
stormed to 14 victories



HORSBURGH
motorsport
IMAGES

Van Gisbergen shows his grit by battling pain to triumph

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Saturday 20 March. That was the day when 23 Supercars drivers had to accept that there was no stopping Shane van Gisbergen in 2021.

Just two weeks earlier (to the day) van Gisbergen's season had looked shot. He'd come off his mountain bike and broken his collarbone. He was rushed into surgery and seemed destined for at least one round on the sidelines, if not more. But thanks to some fibs about how much pain he was in, and a lowered steering column to deal with his limited movement, van Gisbergen managed to get the green light to race at Sandown.

He qualified 17th for the opener on Saturday, at which point plenty questioned the wisdom of what he was doing. Surely one hard hit in the rough-and-tumble of the midfield would worsen his injury and potentially put him out of action for longer... But van Gisbergen rolled the dice, drove his Triple Eight Holden through the field, and took one of the greatest race wins in Supercars history. He then backed that up the next day with two more race wins.

If a broken collarbone (and three

broken ribs, which were only discovered after Sandown) couldn't stop van Gisbergen, nothing could.

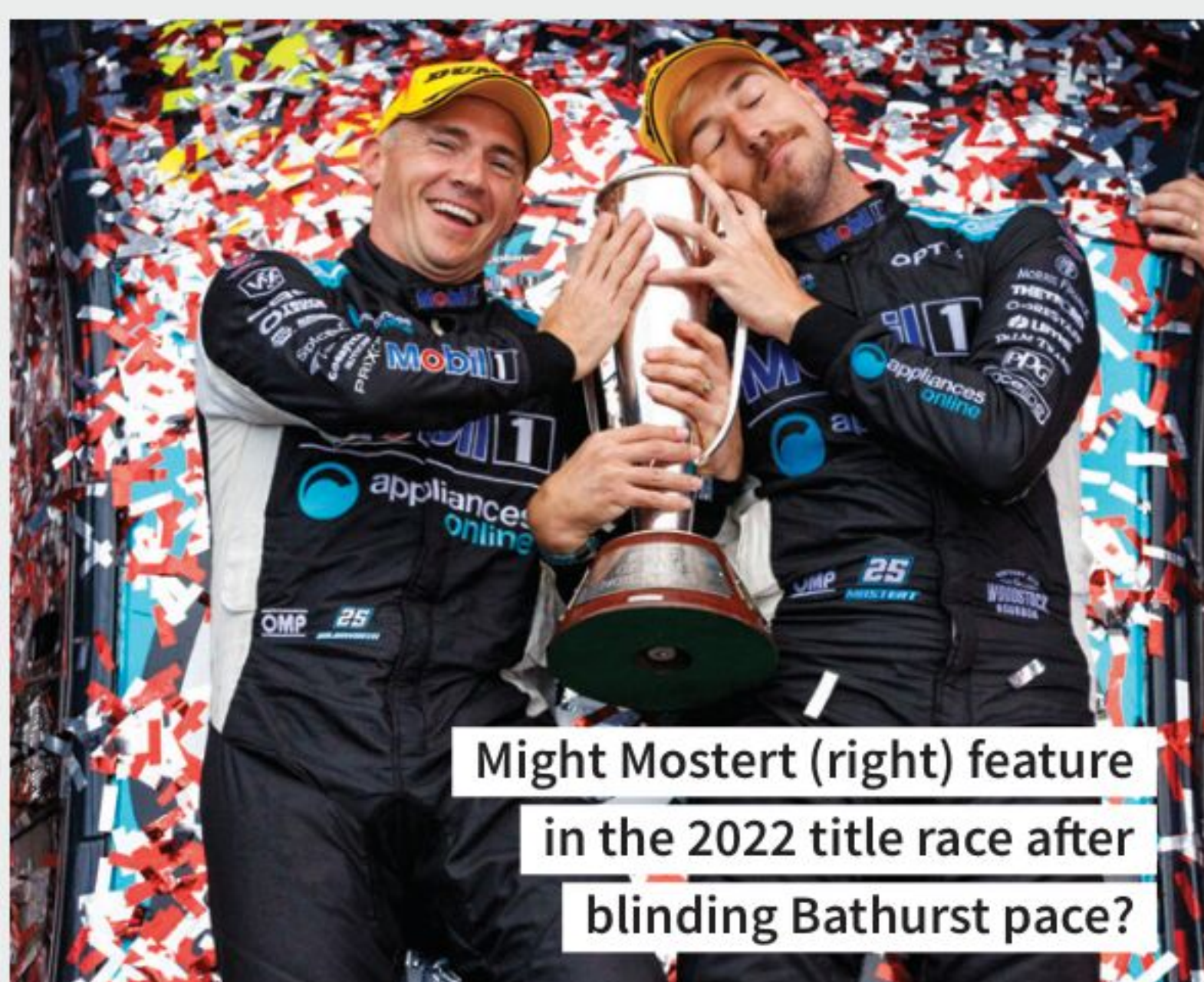
The Kiwi won six races straight to open the season, which put him well in control of the title fight (or lack thereof). Of the 12 race weekends that made up the season, there were only three that didn't yield at least a victory. One was The Bend (where he still had two podiums), another was the third of four Sydney Motorsport Park events (three podiums from three races), and the last was the Bathurst 1000, where he was in the hunt for the win (although clearly outpaced by Chaz Mostert) until a late tyre failure.

Van Gisbergen's total of 14 wins for the season came from six poles, his forceful passing moves, and ability to stretch tyre life without compromising lap speed — that made him near-unstoppable in race trim, even when he wasn't quickest over a lap. His second Supercars title was wrapped up with a round to spare.

Van Gisbergen's Triple Eight teammate Jamie Whincup finished the year second in the points but, realistically, never looked in the hunt for the title. A pair of wins helped move his career tally on to a category-high 124 before he hung up his helmet (as a full-timer at least) at the end of the season.

Mostert finished the year third in the points, the highlight of his season undoubtedly his and Lee Holdsworth's stunning Bathurst 1000 triumph. The pace of that Walkinshaw Andretti United Holden Commodore was nothing short of incredible at Mount Panorama. If the team can bottle that speed, Mostert may have a say in the title fight in 2022.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Might Mostert (right) feature
in the 2022 title race after
blinding Bathurst pace?

HORSBURGH/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

2021 CHAMPIONS



INDY LIGHTS
KYLE KIRKWOOD



INDY PRO 2000
CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN



USF2000
KIKO PORTO



US FORMULA 4
NOEL LEON



FORMULA REGIONAL AMERICAS
KYFFIN SIMPSON



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Supra heroes assemble to avenge 2020 defeat

SUPER GT

If the 2020 Super GT season is remembered for being the one in which Honda somehow stole the glory away from Toyota at the death, then the roles were reversed this year.

Honda went into the final round of the campaign at Fuji looking like it almost couldn't lose the championship, with its trio of Bridgestone-equipped NSX-GTs locking out the top three in the standings and with four of the seven race wins up to that point.

Team Kunimitsu's reigning champion Naoki Yamamoto – also a three-time Super Formula title winner – was looking good for a third tin-top title in four years, with a

handy 16-point lead in his pocket with two races to go. But a rare non-score in the penultimate round of the season at Motegi was followed by another duck in the finale, where he was taken out by an errant GT300 car (ironically a Honda). With the ARTA and Real Racing Hondas having troubles of their own, a Toyota 1-2-3-4-5 headed by the crew that was best-placed to deny Yamamoto – TOM'S pair Yuhi Sekiguchi and Sho Tsuboi – was enough to pull off the unlikeliest of comebacks. Yamamoto was even beaten to the runner-up spot on wins countback by ARTA Honda pairing Tomoki Nojiri and Nirei Fukuzumi.

Toyota had been similarly dominant in

the opening round of the season at Okayama but, after a strong showing in the second event at Fuji, the GR Supra had mostly struggled leading up to the decider. It also suffered unreliability issues when the second engine of the season was introduced, leading to penalties for three Toyota crews.

Nissan remained the third force of the GT500 battle, although it matched its 2020 tally of two wins and locked out the podium at Suzuka. Its best finishers in the standings were Impul duo Nobuharu Matsushita and Kazuki Hiramane, who won at Sugo and almost triumphed again at Motegi, only to run out of fuel on the final lap.

JAMIE KLEIN

Nojiri is the most dominant in a decade

SUPER FORMULA

Mugen Honda driver Tomoki Nojiri put together the most dominant Super Formula campaign since 2009 to seal his first title in eight seasons of trying.

Nojiri set the tone by winning the Fuji season opener before adding a second triumph next time out at Suzuka, albeit only after Dandelion Racing rival Nirei Fukuzumi lost a seemingly nailed-on victory to a puncture.

Fukuzumi appeared the most likely to mount a challenge to Nojiri when he scored his first Super Formula win at Sugo, but his title bid unravelled with a pair of poor and point-less races at Motegi. Nojiri, meanwhile, made it three wins from five in the first of those contests to all but guarantee himself the title. He then sealed the deal with a race to spare in the second Motegi event with



a nervy drive to fifth in mixed conditions.

With the title already decided, Fukuzumi won the season finale at Suzuka to secure second place in the standings ahead of Impul pair Yuhi Sekiguchi and Ryo Hirakawa, who between them clinched the teams' prize for the Toyota-powered squad.

The remaining wins went to TOM'S substitute Giuliano Alesi, who won a rain-shortened affair in just his second Super Formula outing at Autopolis, and Mugen's second driver Hiroki Otsu, whose triumph from pole in the second Motegi race was largely down to him being the

only driver to brave slicks on a drying track in qualifying.

Alesi's Autopolis triumph was one bright spot on an otherwise bleak landscape for the Toyota contingent, which failed to score either a dry-weather win or pole all season.

Toshiki Oyu completed the overall top five for Nakajima Racing, whose other driver, reigning champion Naoki Yamamoto, suffered a dreadful year – he managed a best finish of sixth on his way to a lowly 13th in the standings.

JAMIE KLEIN

New race car, same champion

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

Winning half of the eight races on the make-do-and-mend Porsche Supercup calendar ensured Larry ten Voorde's championship-winning form spanned two seasons and two rear-engined cars.

The Team GP Elite driver ignited his title defence with his first Supercup appearance behind the wheel of the new 992-generation racer. He romped to pole in Monaco and was never headed on his way to victory. He backed that up immediately with a second pole and subsequent triumph at the Red Bull Ring.

A podium arrived in the second Austrian round, but ten Voorde soon ended his comparative dip in form with another success at the Hungaroring. This one was sealed by a touch of good

fortune when surprise polesitter Marvin Klein was denied by the stewards due to insufficient fuel remaining in his tank to provide a sample.

Despite ten Voorde's dominance, he missed out on two small slices of series history. When the Supercup celebrated its 300th race at Spa, it was only fitting that the enduringly successful Lechner Racing squad chalked the win thanks to Dylan Pereira. And when ten Voorde's home venue of Zandvoort made its debut in September, he was a quite distant sixth.

Travel restrictions killed off a Silverstone round to leave a calendar that only ever stopped in mainland Europe and concluded with a double-header Monza finale. Third place in the opener earned the title for ten Voorde, but he won the second race for good measure.



Saucy shows the ART of success

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN

Gregoire Saucy had, remarkably, never won a car race before this season. Nevertheless, he was still considered a major contender for the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine title. But few predicted how convincingly he would win it.

The first season since the merging of the historic Formula Renault Eurocup and the FIA-blessed Formula Regional European Championship was a resounding success.



Saucy can reflect on a commanding campaign

Thirty of the Renault-powered, Pirelli-shod Tatuus cars showed up for the opener at Imola, and the grid peaked at 36 entries for Mugello in October.

Saucy had finished seventh in the 2020 Renault Eurocup and the 21-year-old Swiss remained at ART Grand Prix for a second season. He won eight races – a ninth, at Paul Ricard, was taken away because a differential washer had been inserted the wrong way round – to claim the title with three races to spare.

Two more ex-Renault Eurocup contenders filled the next two places, Hadrien David winning two races with R-ace GP to claim the runner-up spot, and Prema Powerteam's Mercedes F1 protege Paul Aron also scoring twice on his way to third. R-ace team-mates Zane Maloney and Isack Hadjar shared the wins at the Monaco glamour round, and the Barbadian ex-British Formula 4 champion beat the French F4 graduate to fourth in the points.

Other race winners were Franco Colapinto with MP Motorsport; Michael Belov with minnow team G4 Racing; and Prema's David Vidales, who took the opener before fading.

2021 CHAMPIONS



ISHIHARA/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

SUPER FORMULA LIGHTS TEPPEI NATORI



F3 ASIA

ASIAN FORMULA 3 GUANYU ZHOU



ADAC

GERMAN AND ITALIAN FORMULA 4 OLLIE BEARMAN



FFSA

FRENCH FORMULA 4 ESTEBAN MASSON



F4 SPAIN

SPANISH FORMULA 4 DILANO VAN'T HOFF



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Imagine a room full of hopeful Engineers who have worked relentlessly around the clock to meet the project deadline. Some of them are pondering the last time they were able to leave their desk on time at the end of the day. They have had sleepless nights, restlessly thinking about optimal design, tolerances, the parts functioning in a demanding environment...

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Acura crew (right) missed
out narrowly to Action
Express Cadillac (left)



Nasr and Derani crowned at expense of Acura crew

IMSA SPORTSCAR

The IMSA SportsCar Championship again lived up to expectations. As in 2020, the continuing pandemic required adjustments to the schedule, but this time a lone visit north of the border to Canada's Mosport Park was the only casualty. And when the 10-race DPi contest had concluded – a month later than planned – with a spectacular Petit Le Mans, there was virtually nothing to choose between the leading protagonists.

In fact, had the traditional points-scoring system been employed, the Action Express Cadillac of Brazilians Felipe Nasr and Pipo Derani would have been tied at the top with the Wayne Taylor Racing Acura of Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque. Both teams earned

three wins, although a tiebreaker would have favoured Nasr/Derani's three second-place finishes to the four thirds of Taylor/Albuquerque. The deadlock instead was broken by the somewhat controversial introduction of points being awarded after qualifying at each round, whereby a season-high tally of five poles for the Cadillac duo tipped the balance in their direction by just 11 points (3407 played 3396).

You had to feel sorry for the Acura team. They won the Daytona 24 Hours opener and remained in control of the points table until the closing stages of the season finale. Indeed, as dusk fell over rural Georgia, the #10 Acura ARX-05 was running out front and seemingly in position to take the title. Unfortunately, the car slipped back to sixth (where it had started) over the following hour and, although Taylor mounted one of

his trademark charges in a bid to retain the crown he claimed in 2020 for Team Penske, he fell agonisingly short.

Nasr/Derani, by contrast, overcame a difficult start to their campaign, which netted sixth in class in each of the first two races, by finishing on the podium in all but one of the remaining eight events. Their championship was well deserved.

The third DPi manufacturer, Mazda, capped its swansong season with a pair of wins including, appropriately, the final race at Road Atlanta.

GTLM also reached its culmination with a somewhat hollow second successive title for Corvette Racing's Antonio Garcia and Jordan Taylor following the Porsche factory team's withdrawal and the decision by BMW to contest only the long-distance races.

Texan Ben Keating and Denmark's Mikkel Jensen (ORECA) comfortably wrapped up a third straight LMP2 crown for PR1 Mathiasen Motorsports, while second-generation IMSA racer Gar Robinson (Ligier) dominated the newly instituted LMP3 class alongside a variety of co-drivers for Riley Motorsports.

In GTD, a string of three wins and two second places from the final five races vaulted Pfaff Motorsports Porsche pair Zach Robichon and Laurens Vanthoor well clear of the pursuing pack.

JEREMY SHAW

Pfaff Porsche picked up
prize in the GTD division



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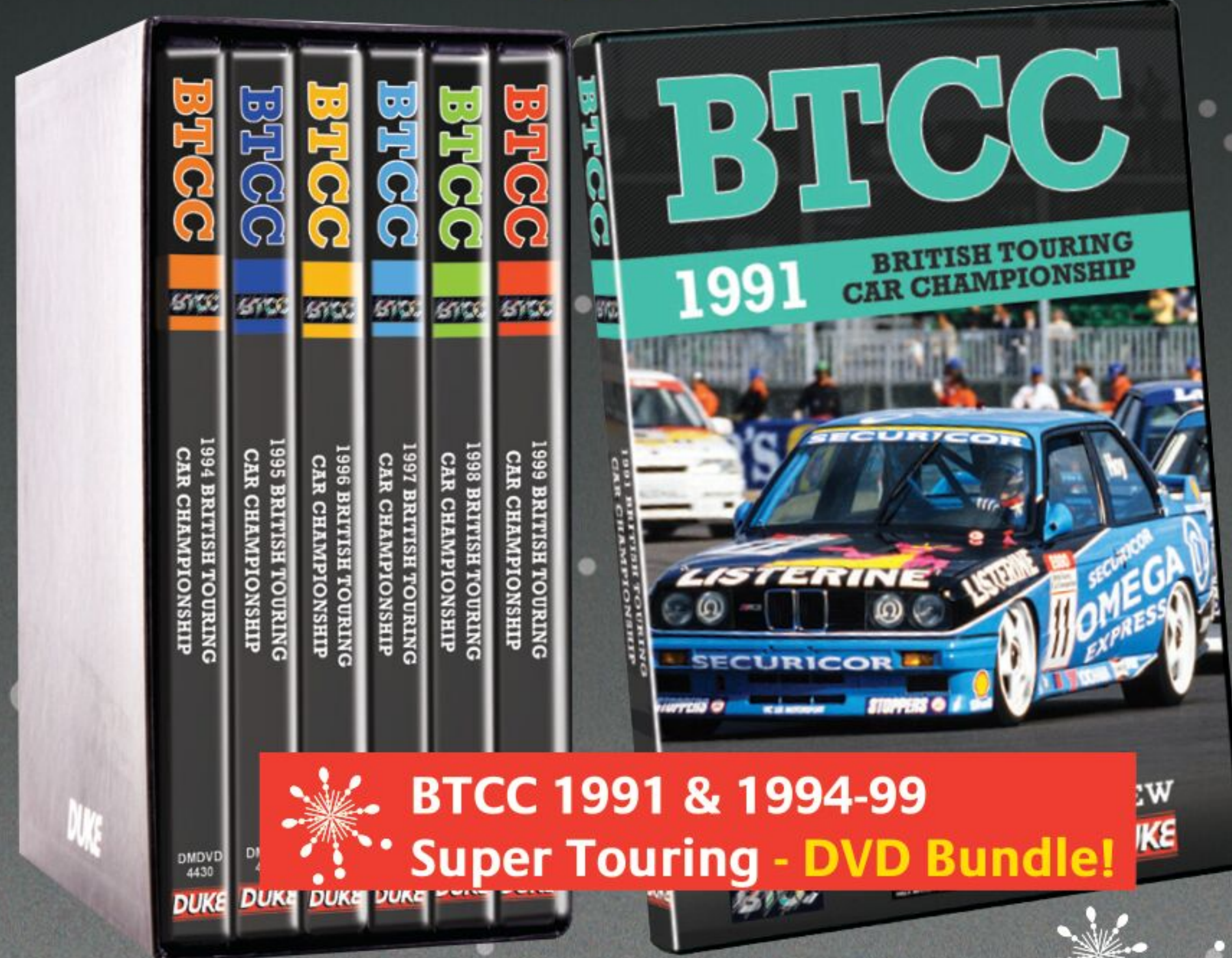
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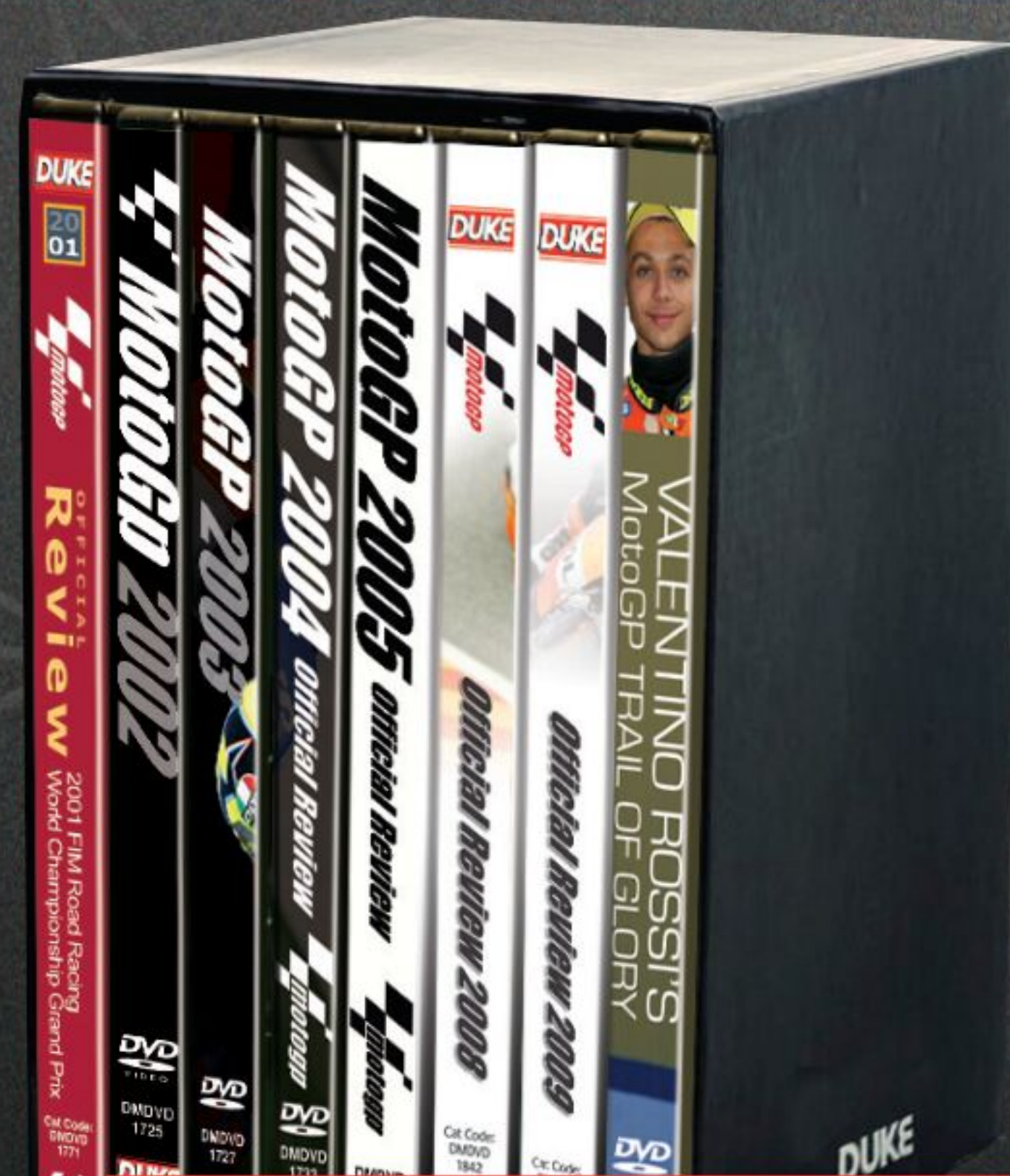
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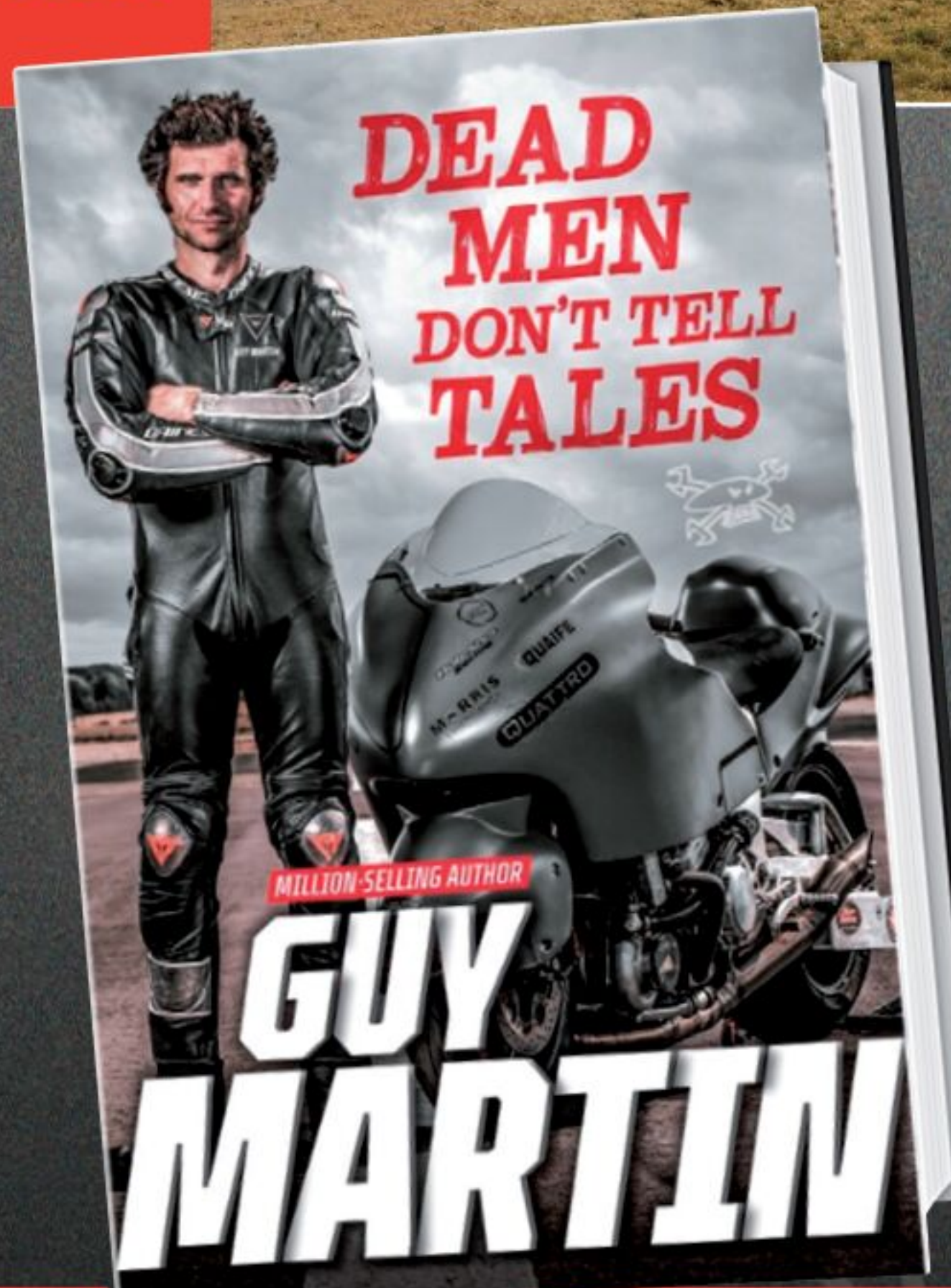
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Kyle Larson poses atop his wounded Camaro at Phoenix

Record-setting returnee Larson on top in a vintage Cup season

NASCAR CUP

Expectations were high as the 2021 NASCAR Cup season approached. The grip of COVID-19 was beginning to loosen, there was an unprecedented redesign of the schedule, plus the return of one of the competition's most talented drivers with one of the most successful teams. NASCAR's broadcast partner, Fox Sports, even ran a series of adverts early in the year proposing that 2021 could be "the best season ever".

Was it? That debate will rage on, but there is little question that the year featured a multitude of captivating storylines, starting with a first-time championship winner in Kyle Larson. He missed most of the 2020 season after his suspension from NASCAR and subsequent firing from Chip Ganassi Racing for using a racist slur during a public iRacing event. While a return to NASCAR competition was never a certainty, he eventually joined Hendrick Motorsports after fulfilling the requirements to lift his suspension.

It turned out to be excellent timing as Chevrolet-equipped HMS enjoyed one of its best seasons. Larson and team-mate Chase Elliott, as well as Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota pair Martin Truex Jr and Denny Hamlin, all advanced to the Championship 4 for the series finale at Phoenix.

In the end Larson, the most dominant driver of the year, came away with the crown. His victory at Phoenix was his 10th of the term — a career-best tally.

Truex, with four triumphs, ended up second in the standings ahead of Hamlin and 2020 champion Elliott, who was named as the series' most popular driver for the fourth consecutive year.

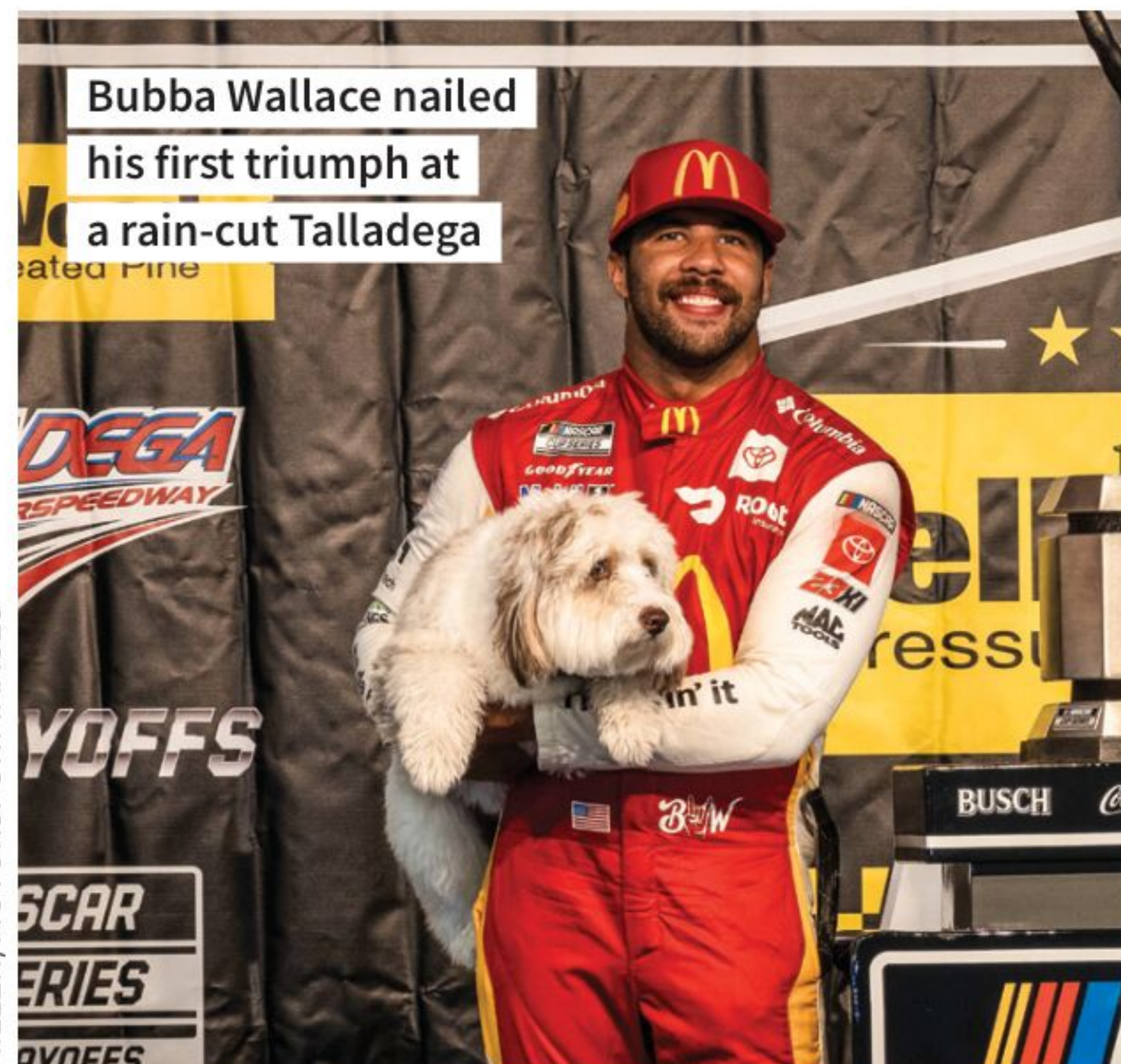
The biggest surprise of 2021 may have been Kevin Harvick, who won a career-best nine races in 2020 and then went winless in the 2021 season. He did qualify for the playoffs and finished fifth in the points.

The campaign included a record number of road-course events — seven — including new visits to Circuit of The Americas, Road America, and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course. It also featured its first dirt race since 1970 when Bristol Motor Speedway was covered with 23,000 cubic yards of dirt for its annual spring race (won by Joey Logano).

Three drivers earned their first career victories, beginning with Michael McDowell's shock success in the season-opening Daytona 500. The very next week, Christopher Bell earned his first win on the Daytona road course.

Bubba Wallace, in his maiden season driving for a team co-owned by Hamlin and NBA legend Michael Jordan, picked up his first series win in a rain-shortened bout at Talladega.

JIM UTTER



2021 CHAMPIONS



NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
DANIEL HEMRIC



NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
BEN RHODES



NASCAR EURO SERIES
LORIS HEZEMANS



BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
GABRIEL CASAGRANDE



SUPER TC2000
AGUSTIN CANAPINO



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WRT bucks the trend by proving GT dominance is possible...

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

In the ultra-competitive GT World Challenge Europe, few things are unequivocal. Audi's Team WRT squad changed that convention in 2021. Charles Weerts and Dries Vanthoor dominated, pure and simple.

The Belgian pair not only defended last season's Sprint Cup and Teams' crown successfully, but added the coveted overall title too and missed out on the Endurance Cup by a mere four points. The long-distance crown went the way of Ferrari's Iron Lynx trio of Alessandro Pier Guidi, Come Ledogar and Nicklas Nielsen.

Key to the triumph of Weerts and



Vanthoor was their unrelenting consistency across the season. The R8 LMS duo sewed up four victories and a further three podiums to claim the Sprint title by the end of August, and another three endurance rostrums ensured the overall crown was theirs a week later at the Nurburgring.

After a disastrous opening Endurance bout of the season at Monza, things started to turn back towards WRT at Magny-Cours in the first Sprint Cup weekend. The Audi was the class of the field in France, topping free practice and qualifying and taking race one under the lights at a canter before finishing second the following day.

Round two at Zandvoort was a Lamborghini affair, with Emil Frey Racing claiming both wins: the Silver Cup pairing of Ricardo Feller and Alex Fontana was victorious in race one, while the Pro car of Albert Costa and Norbert Siedler was triumphant in the second.

Weerts and Vanthoor, by comparison, had an average weekend with an eighth and a third but that was quickly forgotten after a stunning brace next time out at Misano. That gave WRT a firm advantage in both the Sprint and overall standings heading into the jewel-in-the-crown race, the Spa 24 Hours.



That event will be remembered long into the future thanks to Pier Guidi's late overtaking move on Vanthoor – whose Audi had started from the back of the grid following qualifying dramas – to seize a stunning victory as heavy rain sent everyone into the pits to change tyres.

Another win and a second followed at Brands Hatch, and this secured the title

...and goes on to seal debut ELMS title glory

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

When one of the sport's most successful GT3 teams announced its assault on the top class of the European Le Mans Series, few were in doubt that the Belgian Team WRT squad would prove competitive. But with three victories from six races and with the title to boot, Robert Kubica, Yifei Ye and Louis Deletraz surpassed even the greatest expectations to leave the field scrambling in the wake of LMP2's new top dogs.

Wins in the opening two rounds at Barcelona and the Red Bull Ring put Team WRT on the front foot and, while G-Drive Racing and Panis Racing split the wins over the next two races, none of WRT's competitors could match its consistency and execution. The title was won after the fifth race at Spa, underlining the team's performance in its debut ELMS season.

In the new-for-2021 LMP2 Pro-Am class,



specifically catering for bronze-graded racers. G-Drive Racing's John Falb and Rui Andrade proved the most effective of the teams by winning two races and finishing second in the other four rounds.

LMP3 honours were won by DKR Engineering and Laurents Horr after beating the Cool Racing team by a single point at the season finale. The Luxembourg-flagged

team won no fewer than three contests to overcome a sluggish start to the season.

Ferraris dominated a well-supported GTE class, with Iron Lynx battling the AF Corse and Spirit of Race entries all season. The title went to Matteo Cressoni, Miguel Molina and Rino Mastronardi at Portimao, courtesy of the squad's third win of the year.

NELSON VALKENBURG



Vanthoor (left) and Weerts
snared a victory and
second place at Brands

with a round to spare – ironically before their worst weekend of the year at Valencia, where in-form Mercedes pair Luca Stolz and Maro Engel took a double win.

Although the early Endurance rounds went the way of Porsche at Monza and Paul Ricard, the efforts of Iron Lynx to claim a maximum race score at Spa – by leading after the sixth, 12th and 24th hours – and

victory in the season-closing three hours of Barcelona proved Ferrari had the best long-distance package.

Lamborghini took a Silver Cup clean sweep, winning the overall, Endurance and Sprint Cup titles with Emil Frey, while Barwell Motorsport took two out of the three Pro-Am crowns.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Das conquers Foster in EFO

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Cameron Das's five-year stint in Europe has finally netted him a title, with the American piloting his Motopark Dallara-Spiess to victory in the Euroformula Open contest.

The Spanish-run series for the old philosophy of Formula 3, and featuring the Dallara 320 spec chassis, again suffered from poor grids. It hovered around the 12-14-car mark for most of the season, before 16 turned out for the finale at Barcelona. And,



Seven wins underlined
Das's eventual charge
to a European crown

as in 2020, the series was dominated by Motopark and its sister team CryptoTower.

A triple win at Spa helped CryptoTower-run Brit Louis Foster run Das close for most of the season, but seven victories for the Floridian proved insurmountable. Also in the Motopark stable was Red Bull Junior Jak Crawford. The Texan was the fastest driver around with eight wins, but missed two rounds since his FIA F3 commitments took priority, plus the first two races at the Algarve opener because he wasn't 16 until the Sunday, when the third was held!

Malaysian racer Nazim Azman (CryptoTower) took fourth in the points, while Turkish Esports sensation Cem Bolukbasi was a revelation once he joined the HWA-powered Van Amersfoort Racing squad after missing the opening three rounds, and grabbed fifth from team-mate Casper Stevenson.

All of those drivers won races, as did Czech FIA F3 driver Roman Stanek on a one-off with Motopark at Imola. British team Carlin took a series of late-season podiums with Enzo Trulli, the son of ex-F1 racer Jarno.

2021 CHAMPIONS



TCR EUROPE SERIES
MIKEL AZCONA



TCR SCANDINAVIA
ROBERT DAHLGREN



ADAC GT MASTERS
**CHRISTOPHER MIES/
RICARDO FELLER**



INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
**FREDERIK SCHANDORFF/
MICHELE BERETTA**



EUROPEAN GT4 SERIES (SILVER)
BAILEY VOISIN/CHARLIE FAGG



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Finale rage overshadows a promising new DTM era

DTM

The 2021 DTM season will always be remembered for the shambolic finale at the Norisring street circuit, as Maximilian Gotz snatched the title from Liam Lawson's grasp after a chain of events that dealt long-lasting damage to the championship's image.

Red Bull protege Lawson had established himself as the overwhelming favourite for the crown in his first season of sportscar racing at the wheel of an AF Corse-run Ferrari 488 GT3, after successfully rebounding from several unforced errors in the opening part of the campaign. The only driver who could have realistically denied him the title was Kelvin van der Linde,

Audi's two-time ADAC GT Masters champion who brought with him acres of GT3 experience to the DTM fight.

As it turned out, Abt Sportsline-run van der Linde did rob Lawson of the crown — just not in the way most onlookers would have expected him to. With the odds stacked against him in the championship fight, the South African had to try something ambitious at the start of the finale to overcome a 19-point deficit to polesitter Lawson. After making a relatively slow getaway, he attempted a clumsy divebomb at Turn 1, leaving Lawson with a severely damaged Ferrari and several trips to the pits. Van der Linde didn't emerge unscathed from the incident either, and lost several

places before another collision with Gotz's HRT Mercedes left him tumbling further down the order and out of the title fight.

Had the chequered flag been dropped at this point, viewers wouldn't have to resent the way the race unfolded or the outcome of the championship. That's because Lawson had such a substantial lead in the standings that he could have wrapped up the title even while circulating at the back of the pack with a car that was 20s off the pace.

But then Mercedes chose to go against the spirit of customer racing with just a handful of laps to the finish, asking two of its drivers to slow down and allow Gotz into the lead of the race. This completely changed the complexion of the championship, allowing a driver who was at best an outside contender to steal the crown in the most controversial of DTM season finales in recent times.

Naturally, there was widespread outrage over the cruel way in which Lawson was denied a title he thoroughly deserved, forcing series boss Gerhard Berger to issue a statement offering a solution for next year.

The events at the Norisring overshadowed what was otherwise a brilliant first season of the DTM under GT3 rules. The multi-manufacturer battle was a breath of fresh air after the Audi-BMW duopoly of 2020, and the rivalry between van der Linde and Lawson was arguably the best the DTM had witnessed in years.

RACHIT THUKRAL



Lawson (left) distraught; Gotz jubilant after Merc backs him to the crown

Kristoffersson nabs fourth title at the death

WORLD RALLYCROSS

The Hansen brothers were seemingly the only source of consistency during the early part of the World Rallycross campaign. Kevin opened the batting, before a Timmy brace signed off the first three rounds.

This arrived after the Nurburgring curtain raiser had been postponed by flooding, Johan Kristoffersson was stripped of his pace-setting speed in the replacement first round in Spain for a disconnected data logger, and emerging star Niclas Gronholm was struggling to break into the top five.

At the midpoint of the season in Latvia, the tide began to turn in Kristoffersson's favour as he wrung the best out of his new Audi S1, after switching from a Volkswagen Polo. On the second day of the Riga double-header, he took to the top step.

For the next round at Spa, the lanky Swede had to quickly fold his frame out of



the cockpit when his Audi burst into flames between the semi-final and final. But he put out the fire to land a remarkable win.

A third success in the first of the rescheduled German rounds brought him back into the fight. With the gap to Timmy Hansen now down from 17 points to four, Kristoffersson headed both semis in the decider while his fiercest rival was penalised for making contact with Gronholm and was sent to the back of the grid for the final.

At the climax, Kevin Hansen attempted to back Kristoffersson into the clutches of his brother's Peugeot, but he held on to third to seal his fourth crown, the extra win breaking the deadlock in the standings.



Ekstrom is knocked sideways almost immediately in the Pau-Arnos curtain call

Ekstrom spins to electric win

PURE ETCR

Mattias Ekstrom navigated a complicated race format and a near-wipeout in the championship-deciding final round to add the inaugural Pure ETCR title to his packed trophy cabinet.

The Cupra was the pick of the 670bhp all-electric pack as the manufacturer tasted success in three of the five rounds, with Hyundai's Jean-Karl Vernay and Alfa Romeo pilot Philipp Eng (on his belated series debut at Bellahoj Park in Denmark) sharing the remaining spoils.

But while Mikel Azcona was the only racer to snare a brace, it was two-time DTM title winner and 2016 World Rallycross king Ekstrom who walked away a somewhat bruised champion. The Swede sandwiched his Motorland Aragon

win with podiums at Vallelunga, Bellahoj and the Hungaroring to tee up the winner-takes-all showdown at Pau-Arnos.

Ekstrom arrived with a healthy 29-point advantage over nearest rival Vernay, and increased that to 34 through the opening heats. But a collision with fellow front-row starter Eng in the final sent him cascading down the hill, over the grass and landed him with a puncture.

His Zengo Motorsport squad serviced the car when Ekstrom eventually completed the tour, and he resumed a lap down. While Eng failed to emerge from the pits, Ekstrom limped home to a decisive fifth place. Although Vernay grabbed the last-ditch win, he ultimately fell four points short of Ekstrom after three consecutive rounds when he just missed out on podium finishes.

2021 CHAMPIONS



RX2e
GUILLAUME DE RIDDER



EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
**ANDREAS MIKKELSEN/
JONAS ANDERSSON**



MICHELIN LE MANS CUP (LMP3)
TONY WELLS/COLIN NOBLE



MICHELIN PILOT CHALLENGE
JAN HEYLEN



S5000
JOEY MAWSON



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SMOKE AND MIRRORS

THE MYSTERY OF ALESI, HAMILTON AND McLAREN

Direxiv's bid to join the F1 grid for 2008 looked to have big-money backing, big-name associations and a plan to give Lewis Hamilton his big break

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY



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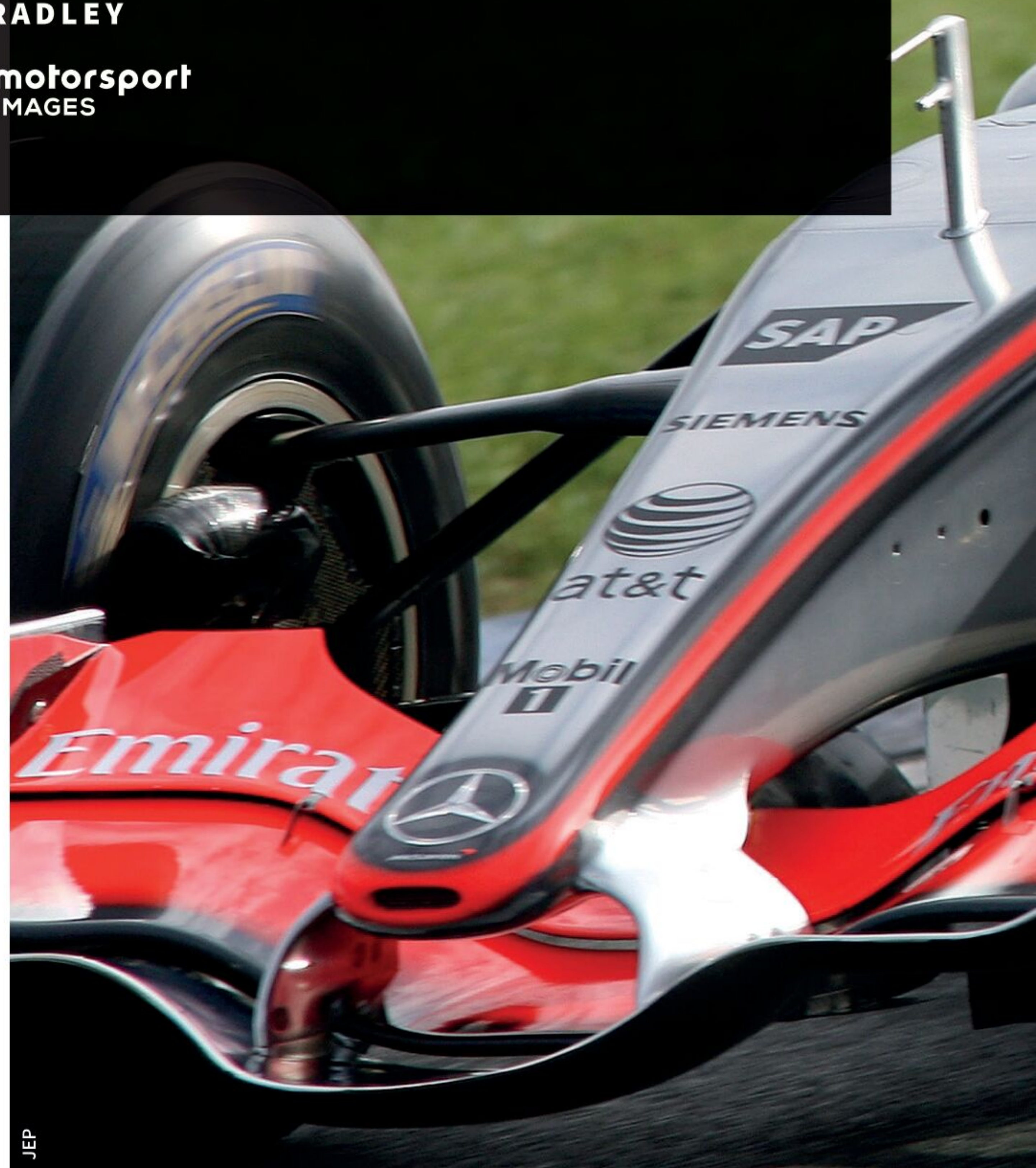
History is littered with failed Formula 1 projects, but one of the most intriguing and bewildering flops of this century was one that aimed to make Jean Alesi a team principal and could have provided Lewis Hamilton's first F1 drive in a Ron Dennis-blessed, Japanese-funded, McLaren-Mercedes B-team.

The mysterious figure behind the Direxiv plan was Shin Akiyama, who from Monaco ran a Tokyo-based investment company that aimed to expand by "collaborating with European organisations looking to enter into the Japanese market using motorsports as a medium for promotions throughout Europe and Japan". He was from a wealthy family background, sustained by a pharmaceutical products business, and had some serious cash to splash.

His conglomerate was a random mishmash of luxury goods and cosmetics firms, mainly based in Monaco, along with Noene (a Swiss producer of shoe insoles), a private-jet-leasing concern and a management company.

Akiyama appointed Misato Haga, a Super GT team boss and former 'race queen', as CEO and figurehead of the Direxiv Motorsport project, which was formed in January 2005. After starting small in the GT300 class of Super GT that season, Direxiv sponsorship deals also emerged in GP2 with Olivier Pla (at DPR), Clivio Piccione (Durango) and Hiroki Yoshimoto (BCN).

Then, in 2006, it went wild: Direxiv logos appeared upon the



Jean Alesi as an F1 team boss? That was the plan

sidepods of the McLaren F1 cars and on Alex Wurz's helmet at Williams, while McLaren protege Hamilton carried them on his ART GP2 machine and his overalls. It became title sponsor of the DPR GP2 team, which was rebranded DPR Direxiv. Yoshimoto's sponsor deal at BCN continued, while Maro Engel ran Direxiv logos in British F3 with Carlin, and the company backed entries in Super GT and Formula Nippon in Japan.

But the truly huge plan was going on behind the scenes – Direxiv had lodged a Formula 1 World Championship entry for the 2008 season and had a five-year proposal on the table to run McLaren-Mercedes customer cars.

David Price, whose DPR GP2 team was resplendent in Direxiv's white-and-blue colours, was a key element of the project. He takes up the tale... "Shin came across as proper at the beginning," Price recalls. "He had a huge apartment in Monaco, near the Columbus hotel. He was quite a big bloke for a Japanese guy and I got on all right with him... I didn't foresee any drama, that's for sure."



Direxiv logos appeared all over motorsport, including on Lewis Hamilton's first McLaren

"I remember he had a massive store of wine — crates of the stuff — on his balcony, and not cheap shit either. He gave me three bottles for my birthday, so I got a merchant to give me a price on them and they were over three grand each!"

Ex-F1 star Alesi, whose wife Kumiko Goto was a huge singing and movie star in Japan, was appointed Direxiv Motorsport's executive director while also racing for Mercedes in the DTM. "The story with me started because a friend of mine, Olivier Pla's father, used to race with me in the Renault 5 Cup in France and we were really close friends," says Alesi. "So, when his son was racing, he found this sponsor. He said to me, 'I have contact with this Japanese guy and he says he will sponsor my full season if he could meet me in Monaco.' I said OK, because I wanted to help.

"I went to see Shin on his boat in Monaco and he said, 'Look, I have a big project in my mind — I want to make an F1 team with McLaren.' I said, 'Hey wait! What are you talking about?' and he said, 'No, it's fine, I already had a meeting about it with Ron Dennis'

"I WENT TO SEE SHIN ON HIS BOAT. 'I HAVE A BIG PROJECT IN MIND. I WANT TO MAKE AN F1 TEAM WITH MCLAREN'"

"Remember, Ron was moving McLaren to the new factory at the time, and Shin said Ron told him that he could rent the old factory in Woking and make a Mercedes B-team. The idea was Direxiv would be his partner, and the guy was really keen to do it. I said, 'Good idea, but make sure everything is fine, you know, because Ron likes everything to be perfect.'

"So the next day I got a message from Ron saying he needed to speak with me about it. I went to his boat in the port, and he said, 'Look, I'm in close contact, we are finishing the contract and Shin Akiyama asked to have you be part of the project.' I said, 'Sure >>



Back in Japan, Direxiv was well established as a brand in Super GT

Ron, but are you sure it's OK with him, everything is fine?' and he said, 'Yeah, yeah, the guy has already paid me two million and everything is going ahead.' I said, 'No problem!' and everything started well like that."

In February 2006, Direxiv's ties to McLaren were officially revealed, including a typically Ron-speak 'Dynamic Wellbeing Programme' with the F1 team, which was also tied into its support of Hamilton. "You have to remember that Hamilton won the GP2 title wearing Direxiv on his overalls," says Alesi. "It's funny to think about that now. It was all before he became such a big star. Ron, at the time, took this money from him to pay for Lewis's championship year with ART."

"Everything was around the Mercedes [junior driver] programme and the first driver was going to be Lewis. Remember, nobody knew what would happen with Lewis and McLaren, nobody knew that this B-team would never happen. Everything seemed like it was going ahead."

Although he felt trepidation about taking the huge leap into F1 team management with no experience, Alesi says he felt reassured by Dennis's involvement in the project. "It would have been fun, because Ron was controlling everything," he says. "My real concern was that it's such a huge and difficult job to be a team principal, you

can't really be a beginner at this level. I was going to have Ron at my shoulder, which would have been fantastic."

The Direxiv F1 plan became public knowledge, ironically enough, on 1 April 2006 – it was one of 22 teams that applied for the 12 available spots, with 11 of those entries being granted to current F1 teams. That left Direxiv as one of 11 proposed squads trying to claim the final slot. This all occurred at a time when there was much talk of a potential breakaway F1 series, while the customer car topic was also a political hot potato. There were plenty of rumours swirling but, at face value, Direxiv appeared a decent bet given its motorsport funding record to date...

Price remembers: "The deal to do F1 with McLaren came out of the blue for me. Ron had actually helped me get started on my own back in 1974, when he was running an F2 team out of Mo Gomm's place. He gave me some advice as he was all right in those days, and we were both based in Woking. I have to say, Ron and I have never really got on, especially since he got into F1."

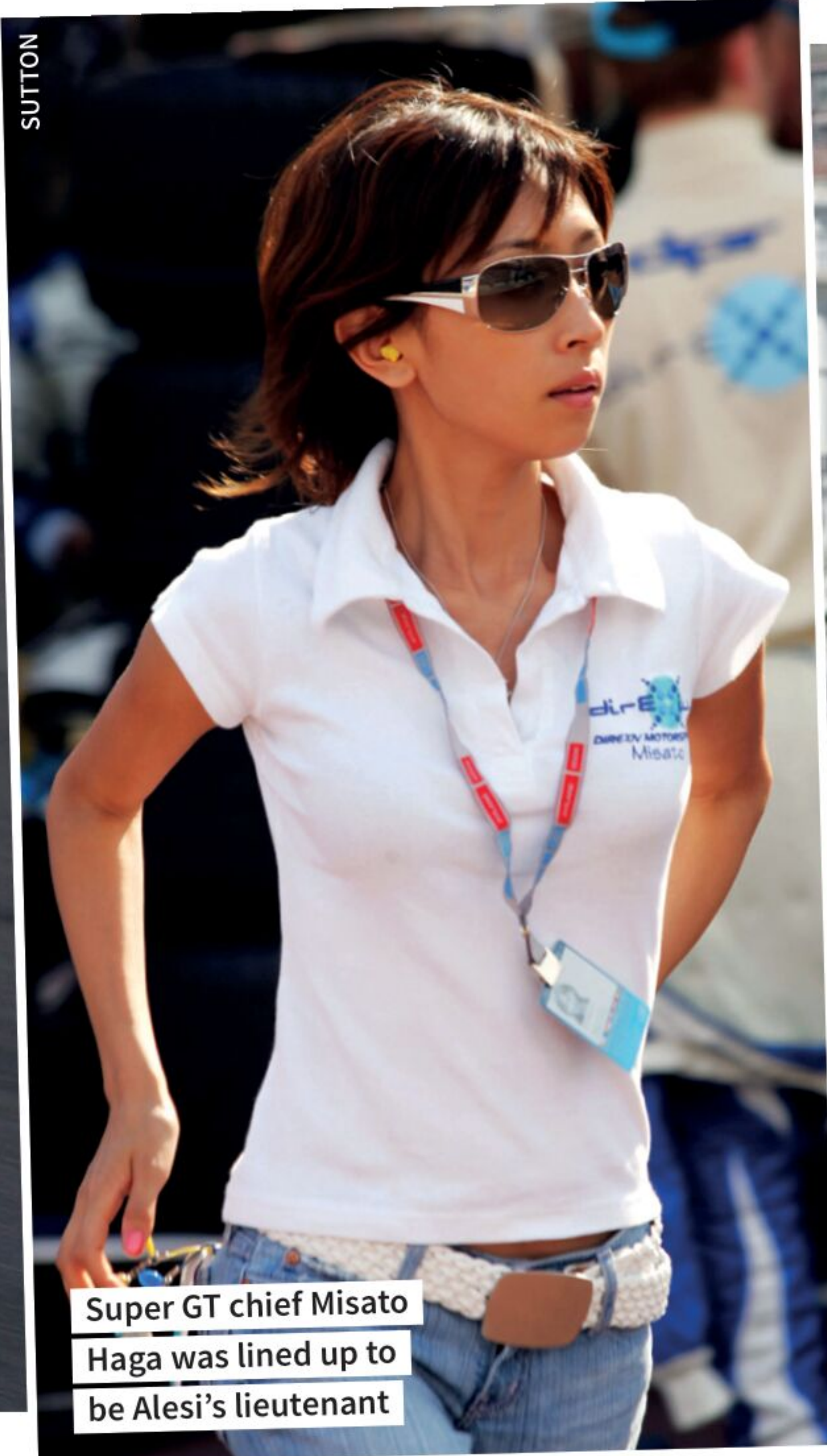
"He had this meeting with Shin on a boat in Monaco, and Shin had asked me to go too. It wasn't really a heavy meeting, but from that came a proposal from McLaren to Shin for the B-team; it was a very comprehensive plan that a firm of consultants and accountants had done for them. And I know he paid for the old factory to be



Dave Price (left) had reservations about F1 and working with Dennis



Spot the Direxiv logo: It was on Lewis Hamilton's arm



Super GT chief Misato Haga was lined up to be Alesi's lieutenant



Familiar name in GP2, but Direxiv never got off the ground in Formula 1

refurbished and it was supposed to run out of there.

"Jean was going to be team principal and wanted me to run it, but I wasn't too keen on being involved, to be honest. For one thing, I couldn't imagine myself working even remotely near to Ron, and I never really did like doing F1 anyway."

Price needn't have worried. In July 2006, the FIA announced that Prodrive would get the available slot on the 2008 F1 grid. Soon after that bombshell had landed, McLaren F1 CEO Martin Whitmarsh admitted Direxiv's plans were now "unlikely" to happen.

Haga, who today runs a team in Super GT, says that was the true catalyst for the collapse of Direxiv's interest in the sport. "Once it was clear we could not go into F1, the investors lost interest and everything unravelled quite quickly," she says. "Everything was set [with McLaren] and we applied, but we were rejected by the FIA, and we weren't told why. If we had been successful, Jean would have been the team boss and I probably would have been second-in-command. It was a special chance, a once-in-a-lifetime chance."

Alesi recalls what happened next with Akiyama: "Slowly, month after month, the guy disappeared, basically! As we went along, he was always on the limit for the payments that he was supposed to be making. He was paying, then not paying, then paying..."

"RON BECAME VERY NERVOUS AND I DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK STUPID, TO HAVE MY NAME ON A FAILED PROJECT"

He was playing a whole lot! Ron became very nervous about the whole thing. Not me; I had nothing engaged, you know, but of course I didn't want to look stupid and to have my name on a project that failed before it had even started."

Price adds: "My wife died that year, and Shin came to the funeral with Misato, which I didn't expect him to. It was nice of them... And then he disappeared! As Jean says, the money started coming in dribs and drabs, I'd have to keep reminding him, and then it got to the stage where Shin didn't answer anything. I tried getting hold of him through Misato and some other people who worked with him, but nobody seemed to know what was going on. It took me by surprise when the money dried up. It came as a shock."

Price says this vanishing act left him short by €900,000, causing him to scramble a deal together to run Vitaly Petrov for the second half of the GP2 season at the expense of Clivio Piccione.

Alesi adds: "Unlike David, I didn't have anything to lose apart from my image being connected to this. David had his team, his business, and running his two GP2 cars on this money. So, for sure, it was more painful for him than for me when money stopped being paid."

Alesi remembers another bizarre episode that summed up the disintegration of the project: "They took a huge boat to Monaco and Shin never showed up; he just wasn't there. I spoke with Misato and she just said, 'You can take it', and I say, 'Of course, thank you, but Shin will come and we can talk about the situation?' and she said, 'No, no, just use it as your guest room.' So I was alone on a 60-metre yacht – like a billionaire!"

For a company that was determined to "stamp its mark on the racing industry", it simply evaporated with barely a trace – along with its owner, Akiyama. "We don't know if he's dead or hiding in another country – he just completely disappeared," concludes Alesi. "Perhaps the best thing is that he disappeared before we even started the F1 team."

Price adds: "To be honest, I don't really know what Direxiv was. I didn't know then what Shin did... and I still don't now." ❧



Akiyama sponsored Maro Engel's Carlin British Formula 3 entry



THE FIRST TIME HAMILTON RACED VERSTAPPEN

When he was 11 years old, the future seven-time F1 world champion took on Max Verstappen's dad in an indoor kart race at the Birmingham NEC

ANDY HALLBERY

PHOTOGRAPHY



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Eleven-year-old Hamilton's standout talent was immediately apparent

If you think the paddock in Melbourne for the opening race of the 2015 Formula 1 World Championship was the first time a Hamilton, Verstappen and Magnussen were getting suited-and-booted and ready to race together, you'd be wrong. In January 1996, at Autosport International in the halls of the NEC, those three names were on the entry list.

At that time Kevin Magnussen was just three years old, and Max Verstappen was still a twinkle in his dad's eye. This, instead, was 11-year-old Lewis Hamilton versus Jos Verstappen and Jan

Magnussen. The event was a pro-media kart race, and the stars came out. You may think it was fun, but give a pro driver a go-kart and a helmet and the competition genes step forward without prompting. But that event also showed that there was someone special in among the stars of the day.

First of all, some background. The pro-media kart race rules were simple. You were allowed three members of staff from each publication, and one pro driver. Autosport had its team, with newly crowned McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Jonny Kane as the pro. There were teams from national and local newspapers as >>

well as Autosport's rivals, all pulling in a pro driver to boost their enthusiastic and keen staff members.

A soon-to-be-launched new title also entered a team late in the day: Autosport's sister magazine, *F1 Racing* (now *GP Racing*). The thing is, at the time, *F1 Racing* didn't have any staff. So, as we have seen so much in this year's F1 battle between Mercedes and Red Bull, the team manager (yours truly) saw a loophole to be exploited.

F1 Racing's pro driver was Dario Franchitti (complete with Autosport-badged overalls). The two members of staff were *F1 Racing* 'columnists' Allan McNish (an F1 test driver at the time) and Jos Verstappen (then racing in F1). Why not? The word 'ringers' was heard often, and alarm bells rang in the Birmingham area.

It's amazing to think of it now, but F1 driver Verstappen, about to be confirmed for Footwork for 1996, flew to Birmingham that morning, purely for this kart race. When he landed he was met at the airport and changed into his plain red overalls in the back of the cab. There were no stage appearances or interviews at the show, just indoor kart racing, and he flew home straight afterwards.

Meanwhile, the little-known *Vauxhall Sport News* had an ace up its sleeve too in the form of Hamilton, who at the time was blazing a trail in junior karting, and was teamed with Niki Cleland, the son of reigning British Touring Car champion John. The Autosport team, which had heard of the 'ringers' on *F1 Racing*'s squad the night before the race, jettisoned two staff members (one being latter-day Formula 1 interviewer Tom Clarkson) and in the hotel bar that night they were replaced by Jan Magnussen and Jason Watt. With Jonny Kane, that was a formidable team, too. The gloves were off! Among the other pros were Ralph Firman Jr and touring car racers Ian Flux and the now much-missed Will Hoy.

Somehow, and we mean this in the nicest possible way, the stars and professionals were beaten to pole by a journalist. Jonathan Noble, now Motorsport.com F1 editor, was fastest, racing for the *Daily Telegraph* and teamed with Oliver Gavin.

Verstappen did the first stint, quickly dispensing with Noble, and there followed a great race with the *Birmingham Post*'s BTCC ace Kelvin Burt. After 15 minutes and the first driver change, Jos climbed out, and handed over to McNish, whose stint coincided with Hamilton's. The pair were bumper to bumper the entire run.



Verstappen quickly took the lead in his stint

“I DO REMEMBER THE TUSSLE. LEWIS INSTINCTIVELY KNEW HOW TO POSITION THE KART”

Hamilton was leading McNish who, despite being in his mid-twenties with F3000 and F1 experience, and still weighing three-fifths of nothing, could not get past. It was a great battle — they were both expert kart racers.

At the next handover, the Scot jumped out. His first words when the helmet was off after that stint? “Christ, that kid is quick. He will be a world champion one day.” Wise words.

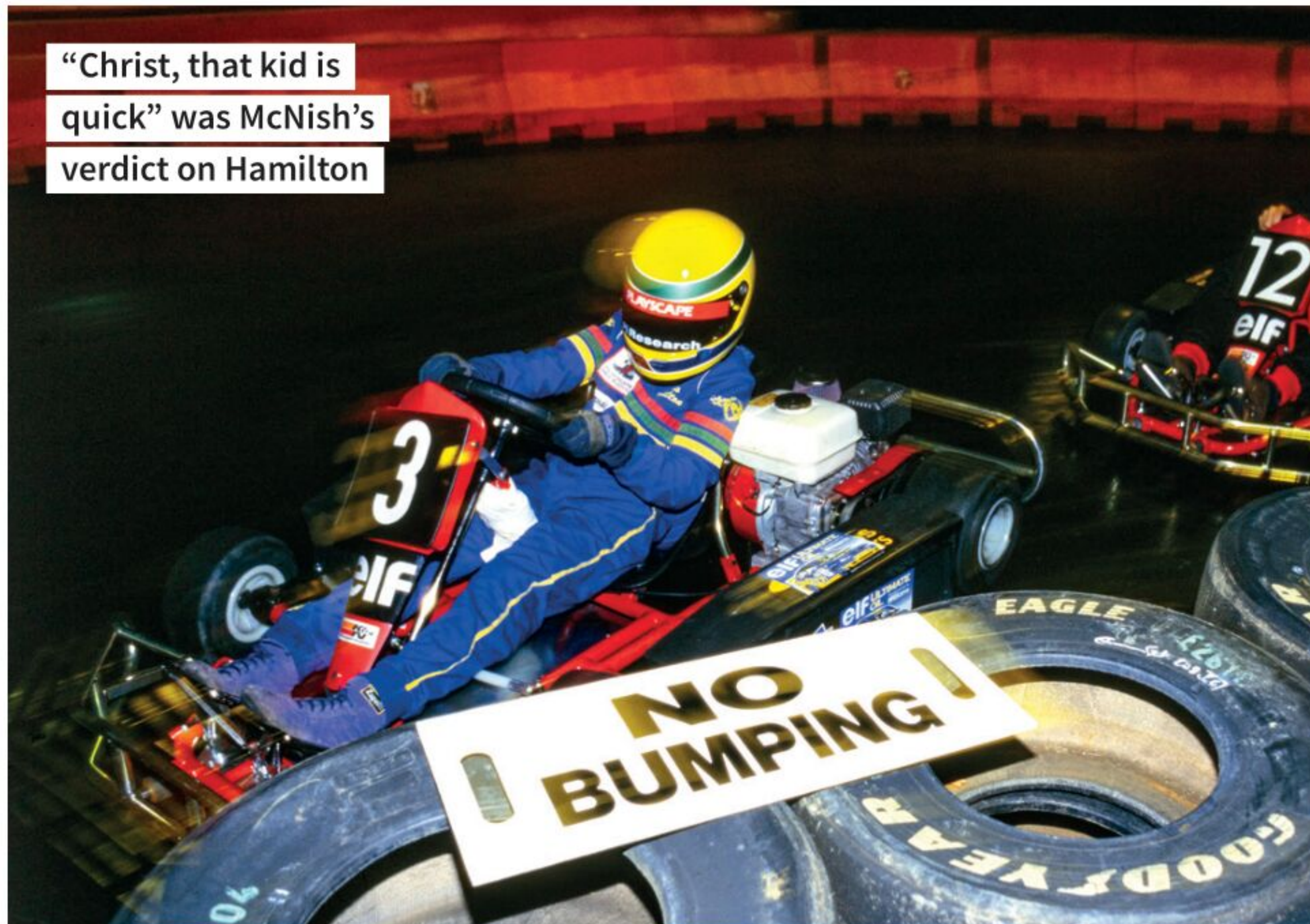
“I do remember the tussle,” says McNish now. “I remember how Lewis instinctively knew how to position the kart. He was 11, so he'd been karting for a couple of years. He was quite small,



Franchitti was his team's pro, while F1 driver Verstappen was signed up as magazine 'columnist'



Autosport's Hallbery hands over to Franchitti



“Christ, that kid is quick” was McNish’s verdict on Hamilton



McNish takes the flag. He remembers the day with a smile

and it was purely and simply the positioning of the kart more than necessarily the speed. The speed was definitely there, but the way he was able to position the kart to race, that gave him an edge and that was something that stood out for me.”

As is the case in F1 this year, the rulebook was squeaked to its limit, loopholes explored. Silently, but cleverly, the *Birmingham Post* team realised its only chance of winning was to leave Burt in the kart so, while other teams changed drivers after 15 minutes, he lapped and lapped, no stops or driver changes, and built quite a lead.

When he finally pitted, Team Autosport took the advantage... briefly. Much to Magnussen’s chagrin, the Autosport staffer was simply not fast enough, and the Dane frantically waved the kart in after three laps, and jumped back in. By now Team *F1 Racing* was in a lead it was not to lose. Sweet victory and a taste of things to come, ‘exploring’ the rules. Verstappen beats Hamilton, part 1.

An abiding memory from that day is the camaraderie. Yes, it was intense on the track, but it was a laugh, too. Oliver Gavin summed it up so well: “Look at the picture, then think what we have all gone on to after, and how our careers have evolved. That was a fun day, and

it’s fun to think of how our career paths have crossed since.”

More than anything, there was an 11-year-old who had made an impact that continues 25 years later, and once more against the Verstappen name. McNish: “I remember Lewis’s dad Anthony was there, and Lewis never said boo to a goose at that point – and you wouldn’t have expected him to at that age. But Anthony was there supporting him, and I remember speaking to him afterwards about it. He was one of the standouts. You look at that picture. Nobody knew who he was then. We all do now.”

While this was only a fun event on a Thursday afternoon in 1996, it was one of the first times Hamilton raced against present and future F1 racers, and he made his mark to many. That includes Verstappen. While the Dutchman won that day, he had to dash to the airport before the prizegiving to get his flight back, changing again in the cab. It was a victory for the ‘ringer’ team.

McNish too remembers it with a smile. “That’s the sort of thing I love,” he says. “Reading the rulebook and exploiting it to the maximum... Those kart races were really good, actually. And effectively that’s the first day I became a journalist!” ❧

FOND MEMORIES OF MAGNUSSEN

Oliver Gavin’s reaction to these photos from 1996 takes the newly retired sportscar champion straight to reflective mode.

“Looking at the picture and all those drivers, weirdly the person I never thought I’d have any real contact with, or spend any significant time with, was Jan Magnussen,” he recalls.

“Jan and I banged wheels in 1992 at the Formula Ford Festival, and I came off on the wrong side of that deal! He ended up winning, and then he went with a very young Kevin [then a baby] to the podium there too, which was remarkable.

“Then we went on to be team-mates at Corvette for so many years. We were together for the first time in 2004. He was third driver

on my car, and then he ended up being on the team all the way through until the end of 2019, so we were together all that

time. Fifteen years!

“That was strange in some ways, but also amazing. I got to know him so well. He is genuinely a

great guy, a real family guy. I got to know him as he began to lose that somewhat wild craziness that was there in the Formula 1 days, and also the Panoz days.

“He came to us with all of those sorts of sharp edges knocked off, and turned into this fantastic sportscar driver that the team absolutely loved having. He was an amazing driver to work with and to drive with.

“You look back on those points in your career, like this picture, and you see how people’s careers have evolved, where they’ve moved to and what they’ve done.”



Magnussen would become 15-year team-mate to Gavin

NEVER GIVE U

Making it in motorsport can be tough, and sometimes drivers move elsewhere before their best chance arrives. Here are some of those who made it back

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES



Westbrook struggled to move up the ladder after Opel Lotus Euroseries

RICHARD WESTBROOK

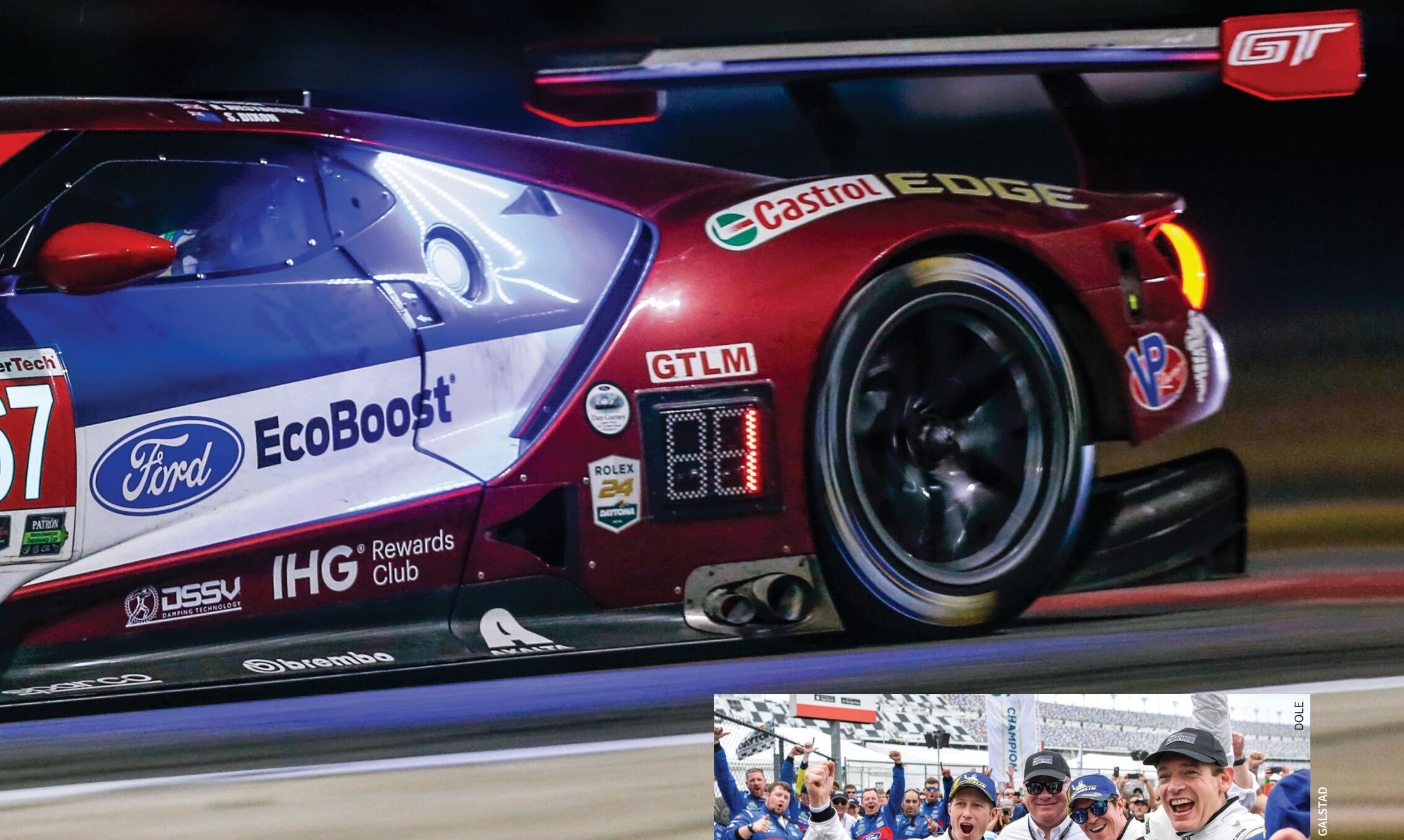
When Richard Westbrook resumed his racing career in the Porsche Supercup in 2002, there were any number of rumours about what he'd been up to in the six years since his single-seater career petered out after a bitza season in Formula 3. Collecting debts in London's East End and bumming around on a beach in Thailand were among them. Neither was true, but Westbrook had tried various jobs as he struggled to find a new vocation.

"I had a go at a lot of different things, but none of them did it for me," recalls Westbrook, who is about to return full-time to the IMSA SportsCar Championship with the JDC-Miller Cadillac squad in season 21 of his second career. "I really struggled with not racing; I could barely bring myself to pick up a copy of Autosport.

"In my mind I was never an ex-racing driver. I managed to wangle a couple of Formula 3000 tests, but the teams needed budget so it was never going to happen for me there. Touring cars didn't float my boat, and sportscar racing wasn't on the radar for young drivers back then."

The catalyst for Westbrook's return was Autosport's Marcus Simmons. A regular mini-feature in the mag at that time was called *Where are they now?*, and Simmons put one together on old mate 'Westy', talking about his successes in the Opel Lotus Euroseries in 1994-95 and how he missed out on an F3 drive with the

P THE DREAM



**“I STRUGGLED WITH NOT RACING;
I COULD BARELY BRING MYSELF TO
PICK UP A COPY OF AUTOSPORT”**

KMS-run Benetton Junior Team in Germany for 1996.

“A friend called me up after reading it and told me I really had to get back racing, so I thought ‘sod it’ and sold my flat in Stockwell to scrape the money together,” recalls Westbrook. “I thought I’d get into the Porsche Supercup, which I remembered from when I was doing Opel Lotus and we were at some of the grands prix as well.”

Westbrook bought a drive with the Kadach Tuning team and thought he would breeze to some decent results. “I’d raced in F3 and tested in F3000, so I thought it would be easy,” he recalls. “I had no idea how difficult it would be. I was up against Porsche specialists like Stephane Ortelli and young kids like Timo Bernhard. If you made it into the top six you were doing well.”

The equity Westbrook had in his south London flat only stretched to a partial Supercup season in which he managed no better than a sixth



Celebrating 2018 GTLM
Daytona success with
the Ganassi Ford squad

place, but he persevered and “pulled together a few local sponsors” to move to the new Porsche Carrera Cup GB the following year. He mounted up “massive debts” on the way to the runner-up spot in 2003.

He went one better in 2004 and returned to the Supercup the year after. Back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2007 resulted in a Porsche factory drive. Over the years he’s had manufacturer contracts with Nissan, Chevrolet, BMW, Ford, Aston Martin and Glickenhaus. His successes include a class FIA GT2 Championship title in 2009 and victory in GT Le Mans in the Daytona 24 Hours in 2018. That’s not to forget two overall podiums in the US enduro.

“Sometimes I pinch myself when I think about the past 15 years,” says the 46-year-old. “I went from scratching my head in Stockwell wondering what I was going to do with the rest of my life to getting paid to do what I love.” >>

ALICE POWELL

Life for Alice Powell during a three-year period in which the 2021 W Series frontrunner didn't compete included some pretty mundane work. Her dad is a builder and she skivvied for him to help make ends meet, but she never turned her back on a career that had taken her to GP3 in 2012.

"I didn't give up trying to get back in, but I supported myself with coaching and working with my dad," explains the 28-year-old. "I got all the crappy jobs, unblocking stuff and lifting and carrying. So at least it kept me in shape."



Powell got to GP3 before the momentum ran out

"I GOT ALL THE CRAPPY JOBS, LIFTING AND CARRYING. SO AT LEAST IT KEPT ME IN SHAPE"

"The racing dream never went away. I was there in the paddock floating around, doing my coaching thing and looking for that opportunity. I kept my hand in with a bit of karting, but even that costs a lot of money these days. So sometimes that meant going to Daytona Milton Keynes to have a mess around in Dmax karts."

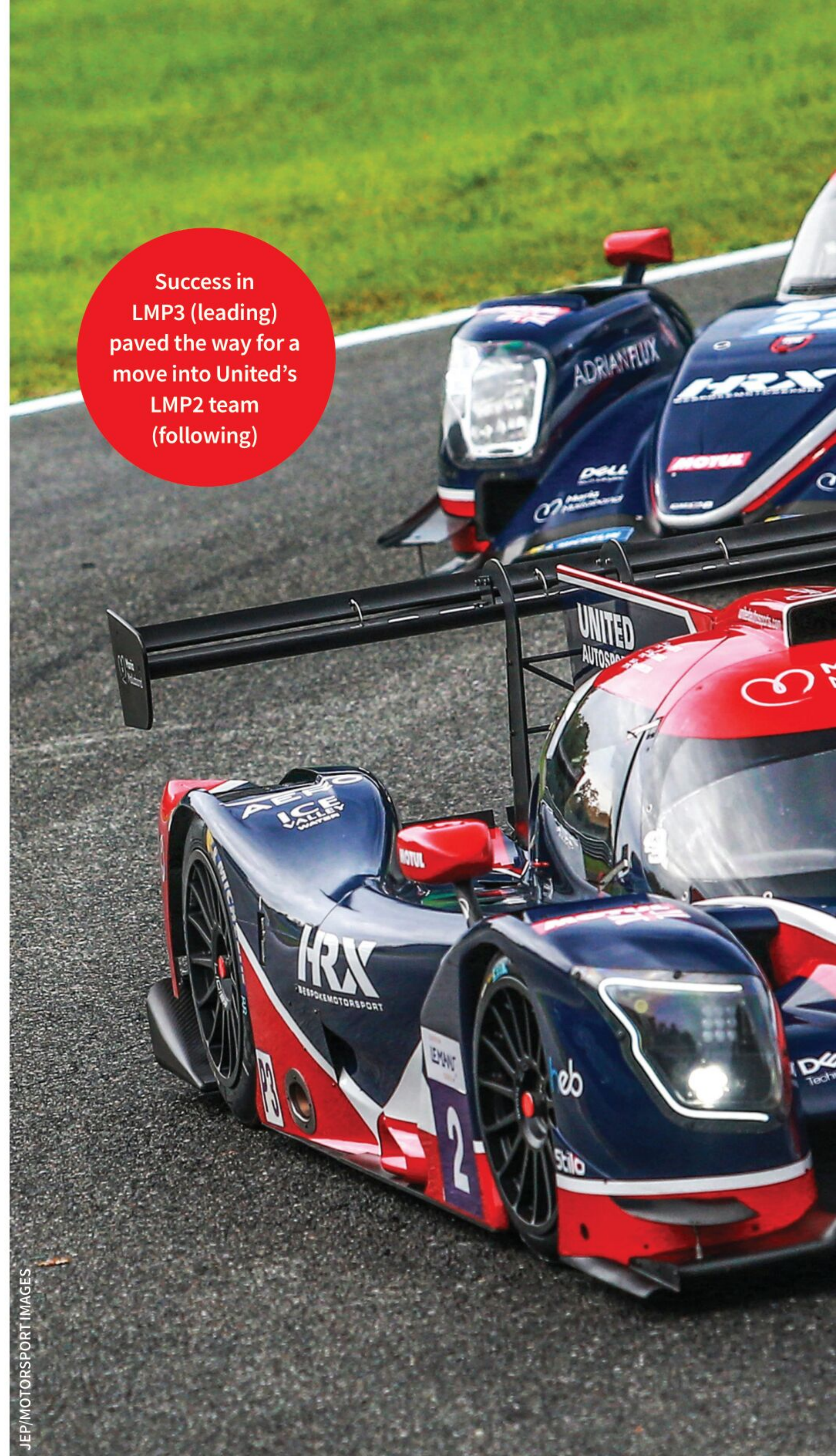
After racing successfully in the club-level MotorSport Vision Formula 3 Cup "to try to keep my name out there and the momentum going" in 2013, Powell landed a paid-for drive in the Asian Formula Renault Series in 2014. She gained the title with five victories, but little in the way of that career momentum.

Powell raced a couple of times in 2015, but then had to sit on the sidelines until the arrival of the W Series in 2019. She came through the selection process and finished third in season one, and was a close runner-up in 2021 after its COVID-enforced year's hiatus.

"If it wasn't for W Series I don't think I'd be racing right now," says Powell, who is looking at options in sportscars before deciding whether to return to W Series alongside her Formula E simulator role with Virgin. "As the years went by I was getting to the stage where I didn't think anything was going to happen."



Three W Series wins helped Powell to the runner-up spot in 2021



Success in LMP3 (leading) paved the way for a move into United's LMP2 team (following)

WAYNE BOYD

Wayne Boyd never stopped racing. In the years after his mainstream single-seater career faltered, the Northern Irishman always turned out in the events in which he'd burst onto the scene at the age of 16 in 2007. For three seasons in 2013-15, the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch and the Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone were his only races. He did them, he says, because "I love that stuff, it's proper racing, but also to keep my name out there".

His showings at the Festival and the WHT in his 15-year-old Van Diemen in 2007 are central to the story of both his first and second careers. Richard Dean picked up on his speed at Silverstone and put his name forward to driver manager Chas Cole, who took Boyd into British Formula Ford in 2008 and onto F3. After a fallow period, it was Dean who brought him back to race for the United Autosports sportscar squad he'd established with Zak Brown.

Boyd was working with a team for which he did a bit of coaching on an entry into the GT4 class of the British GT Championship in 2016. Dean got wind of it and, at a time when United was gearing up to enter the LMP3 arena, reckoned Boyd would fit the bill as one of the super-speedy silver-rated drivers he was looking for.

"WE WERE SCRAPING THE BARREL: I HAD TO SELL MY ROAD CAR AND MY DAD MADE A LOT OF SACRIFICES"



"I never gave up hope, but I always told my dad that we shouldn't get them up too much because then you don't end up disappointed," says Boyd, who ended up taking his meagre budget to United for a campaign in the European Le Mans Series with a Ligier-Nissan JSP3 in 2016. "We really were scraping the barrel: I had to sell my road car and my dad made a lot of sacrifices."

Those sacrifices turned out to be worthwhile. Boyd has been a permanent fixture at United over the past six years and will stay for a campaign in the Michelin-sponsored Le Mans Cup on the ELMS bill in 2022. In those half-dozen seasons, he's won the P3 class of the ELMS and its Asian equivalent, contested the Le Mans 24 Hours and taken in some classic North American tracks on the IMSA circuit.

"I owe it all to Richard and Zak, just like I owed so much to Chas first time around," he says. "My only regret looking back is chasing single-seater stuff for too long when I should have been looking at sportscars."

"Maybe it all happened for a reason. I don't think things could have ended up much better."



MICHAEL STEPHENS

British race fans may remember the name Michai Stephens from the end-of-season Formula Ford extravaganzas at Brands Hatch and Silverstone a few years back. The American made an immediate impact as part of the Team USA Scholarship attack on the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy in 2014 and 2015. Six years on he's just finished his first season in sportscars in his homeland – after four years without racing.

Stephens looked like he was set for big things when he was plucked from Skip Barber school racing events to join the scholarship by its founder, longtime Autosport man Jeremy Shaw.

"I WAS GAINING THE SKILLS TO MAKE SURE I WAS READY FOR THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY"

The Skippy instructors reckoned the boy was a bit special and, after coming through a shootout to get the Scholarship drive, he finished third in the WHT at the wheel of a Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray (a race won by Wayne Boyd). Without the finance to race the following year, he was invited back onto the scholarship by Shaw in 2015.

That was followed by his first full season of racing in 2016 in the USF2000 series. Shaw recommended him to a team entering the championship for the first time. A disappointing campaign with an operation that, says Stephens, "was even more of a novice than its driver", was followed by four years on the sidelines.

"I never X-ed myself out of contention," says Stephens. "I tried to remain relevant and ensure that people could put a name to the face. I worked for various racing schools and doing some private mentoring. I worked with a youth motorsport programme in Indianapolis, as well as doing a nine-to-five."

"I didn't realise at the time, but I was gaining the skills and growing as a young adult to make sure I was ready for the next opportunity when the door opened. Back in my early days of racing I was an extremely ignorant soul."

The door opened again for Stephens this year when Shaw – "he's my guardian angel" – recommended him to a motorsport enthusiast from Canada looking to work with some young drivers on a GT4 programme. After half a season of racing in regional events, JMF Motorsports entered its Mercedes-AMG GT4 run by former IndyCar team Conquest in the GT4 America Series. Sharing with Colin Mullan, they won both races on the last two weekends of the series at Sebring and then Indianapolis.

The experience whet Stephens's appetite for sportscar racing and, though he turns 30 next month, he reckons he still has time to become a fully paid-up professional: "I don't believe the industry's perception of a timeline should define my desire to achieve my dream." >>



BEN HANLEY

Ben Hanley never stopped racing for the five seasons in which his name seldom appeared in the pages of Autosport. The Brit went back to karting, notched up some decent successes, and earned a living from it. But the itch to race cars never went away from the 2007 Formula Renault 3.5 runner-up during his years out.

The former member of Renault's driver development programme, a contemporary of Lucas di Grassi among others, was always working towards a return and never stopped driving racing cars: he was regularly called upon by Dallara and Pirelli for a bit of GP2 and GP3 testing. But his efforts to find his way into a permanent race seat after leaving the French manufacturer's fold during 2008 were unsuccessful.

"I'm really thankful for the opportunity Renault gave me and the funding that went with it: it allowed me to solely concentrate on driving," says the 36-year-old, who was on the French

manufacturer's books in 2006, 2007 and into 2008. "But it did create a bit of an issue when it all ended because I didn't know anyone apart from the teams I'd raced for."

"I was always actively trying to get racing again," adds Hanley, who managed a handful of outings in Euroseries 3000 and then Superleague Formula in the two seasons after he left the Renault fold. "I did start looking at sportscars, but whenever I contacted people it was always 'but you've got no experience'. I probably wasn't very good at selling myself."

That changed when he linked up with the late Mike Perry, a driver manager best known for working with Michael Krumm for 20 years. It also coincided with Hanley hitting five seasons without a race under his belt, which meant he could get a silver grading under the FIA's system of driver categorisation.

Hanley suddenly became a commodity, something tempered by

"IT WAS ALWAYS 'BUT YOU'VE GOT NO EXPERIENCE'. I PROBABLY WASN'T VERY GOOD AT SELLING MYSELF"

the knowledge that his silver status was likely to last for only one season. Perry got him in at Elton Julian's DragonSpeed squad for the European Le Mans Series in 2016. A couple of ELMS wins and class victories at the Daytona and Le Mans 24-hour classics, always sharing with DragonSpeed patron Henrik Hedman, followed during six years with the team. They included a brief foray into IndyCar and two appearances at the Indianapolis 500.

"Without Mike and DragonSpeed I probably wouldn't be racing today," he says. "I never thought nine or 10 years ago that I'd get the opportunity to race an IndyCar."



BRYCE WILSON

To describe Bryce Wilson's first career as a whirlwind is no exaggeration. He finished fourth on his Formula 3 debut in what he thinks was only his seventh car race and disappeared almost as quickly. That was at the back end of the 1970s. The better part of 20 years later the Scot returned to the track, won the Renault Spider one-make series and landed a manufacturer testing deal in British Touring Cars.

Wilson walked away from an F3 drive in 1979, came back for a handful of races in Sports 2000 in 1981, and then spent years regretting his actions. That combined with scrimping and saving for a comeback.

Wilson's explanation for why he turned his back on racing first time around is complicated. He initially says he was "a stupid young man, who needed a kick up the arse". He then concedes that he was spooked by his abilities at the wheel of a racing car.

"I was frightened, not of crashing or killing myself, but of how easy it came to me," he says. "It was as if the car was driving itself. I was aware of things that I shouldn't have been, like faces in the crowd. It concerned me and I was also scared that one day I'd get back in the car and I wouldn't be able to do it anymore."

Wilson was picked up from karting by well-known Scottish club racer Laurence Jacobsen, who stopped racing himself to support his new protege. A season in Northern Formule Libre events in a Ford BDX-powered Chevron B29 in 1978 was followed by his F3 debut at the end of the year in a Ralt-Toyota RT1.

After his impressive run in the end-of-season Thruxton non-points race, Wilson was placed with the Ehrlich team for 1979, only to walk away mid-season. There were a handful of races in an S2000 Chevron in 1981, including a victory at Oulton Park, and then nothing until 1996.

"I went back to karting for a couple of years and got a job," says Wilson. "But there was this thing at the bottom of my stomach saying you've got to go racing again. I started saving up to get back out there."

"THERE WAS THIS THING AT THE BOTTOM OF MY STOMACH SAYING YOU'VE GOT TO GO RACING AGAIN"



Wilson made a handful of Formula 3 starts before deciding to walk away

That took until 1996, when Wilson bought a Renault Spider one-make racer and contested the last few races of that year's series. He then teamed up with ex-Special Saloon racer Alan Humberstone's BRC Engineering team and waltzed to the title, winning nine of the 15 races.

Wilson impressed during a test in a Renault Laguna Super Tourer, part of his prize for winning the title, and then got picked up by Nissan. He was part of the test team at Nissan Motorsport Europe, which built the cars RML ran in Britain, in 1998 and 1999.

"I probably left it too late," says Wilson. "With Nissan there was the hope that testing might turn into a race drive, but Super Touring was dying and Nissan pulled out. It took too long to get the money together."

After a few years picking up drives here and there, most notably with former NME employee Bob Neville's RJN squad, Wilson belatedly became a full-time motorsport professional in his forties. He started his own team called If Motorsport, which ran in Radicals before moving into VdV with a Group CN Ligier.

Wilson chose the name for a couple of reasons: "If" is a word you hear a lot in parc ferme, but it kind of referred to my career as well. It's not for me to say how good or not I was, but I think it's fair to say I had some talent. It's also fair to say that I wasted it."



Talented Wilson became a force in Renault Spiders but it was "too late"

ROSBERG BEATS HAMILTON TO INAUGURAL EXTREME E GLORY

A last-ditch victory for X44 drew the team level at the top of the standings in Dorset, but RXR's better results earlier in the year clinched the crown

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

Did motorsport possess one last championship-deciding shock in 2021? That was the question when Extreme E last weekend concluded its inaugural season at the Ministry of Defence-owned Bovington military base in Dorset, the replacement venue for the Argentinian round cancelled by COVID-19.

A showdown for effective sister series Formula E had been largely determined by a startline shunt wiping out two of the chief title protagonists. The outcome of World Rallycross was skewed by a penalty, the WEC's GTE Pro class settled by a punt, the DTM resolved by audacious first-corner lunges. And then, of course, Formula 1 stole the turbulent show in Abu Dhabi.

The short answer last weekend was 'not quite'. But Extreme E was all the better for it. The car unreliability that has dogged the first year of all-electric SUV off-road racing was, at last, all but eradicated for the Jurassic X-Prix. That allowed a straight fight for the crown, and Rosberg X Racing came out on top by the slimmest of margins.

The pre-event series leader converted its points cushion into the glory, but had to rely on countback to do so. As a result, the title

came courtesy of its three wins earlier in the campaign after a last-ditch event victory finally arrived for X44 to draw it level on points at the muddy tank-proving ground.

The sodden clay top layer – which, despite the lack of rain, was kept moist by constant thick fog – created a much more forgiving surface to ease the strain on the cars, even if the inches-deep mud quickly covered up all the sponsor logos the championship has been quick to attract. The softer landings over the bumps, combined with new larger spherical joints and upgraded steering racks and toe links, meant the nine updated Odyssey 21s could begin to cash the cheques written by their brawny design.

Andretti United team boss Roger Griffiths gave this assessment of the much-needed upgrades: "They're fairly straightforward, simplistic measures but should go a long way to fixing some of the problems. No one wants to see a final where only two cars [of five] are running by the end. The third-placed car shouldn't just be the one that gets the furthest before it fails and with the quickest car broken at the side of the road.

"I think [car constructor Spark Racing Technology] are taking it pretty seriously. It's an improvement but it's not night-and-day different. There are some more fundamental things they need to address on the car, and I know they are working on these for next season."

Before then, Lewis Hamilton's X44 crew maintained its 100% qualifying record from the five events on the calendar by topping the two sessions. Due to the limited daylight in the British winter, the opening shootout took place on Friday before the second on Saturday. Ahead of the first attempt, the team escaped a penalty for missing its allocated start time after a software upgrade caused its front inverter to malfunction and required a swap.

But with the replacement fitted, nine-

time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb – despite clattering over a large advertising sign – and team-mate Cristina Gutierrez topped both runs. In doing so, five bonus points were theirs as they tried to bridge the 16-point deficit to RXR. Its duo of Molly Taylor and Johan Kristoffersson were a subdued fourth in the overall times, but had a clear directive to approach with caution and preserve the car to protect their advantage. Notably, this was by far the most competitive runout of the year, as seconds rather than minutes covered the entire grid.

X44 then booked its slot in the five-car finale by edging to victory in the first of the semi-finals. A new rules directive (see panel, p76) mandated all male drivers to take the race start, so Loeb was in the hot seat and lined up on the far-right side of the grid with the shortest run to the first corner.

While his initial launch was the strongest,



Top qualifiers Loeb and Gutierrez bagged an overdue X-Prix win



McMASTER



Kevin Hansen in the JBXE machine enjoyed a formidable second phase. He waited for the sizeable Continental tyres to gain traction, and then deployed the four-second and 400kW hyperdrive boost to bully his way past Loeb. Hansen soon piled on the misery, and pulled out a remarkable 4s lead, while there was a spin for third starter Lance Woolridge, who replaced the crash-prone Stephane Sarrazin at Veloce Racing.

The South African debutant rejoined some 10s down but tore chunks out of Loeb and Hansen to close the gap. As his wing mirrors became occupied, Loeb responded on lap two by nailing the points-paying super sector, setting a mighty 49.506s (the best of the weekend) through the five waypoints to reel in Hansen ahead of the driver swap. So much so that Loeb was less than a foot behind Hansen when he punched the speed limiter and cruised into

the 'pitlane'. Behind them, Woolridge was right on the pair and ready to pounce.

For the tighter confines of the half-size 2.36-mile Jurassic X-Prix lap, which created three-lap heats rather than two, a split pitlane was used to accommodate the nine bays. JBXE had to round a right-hander to resume and that, combined with a faster X44 switcheroo, created the first Extreme E change for position in the switch zone.

That meant Gutierrez emerged with a 1s lead over Hansen's team-mate Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky as the JBXE-run Swede lost a further 0.5s understeering through the quagmire. But once Ahlin-Kottulinsky cleared the boggiest section of the course, she charged after Gutierrez to cross the line just four tenths in arrears.

Both X44 and JBXE progressed into Sunday's finale at the expense of Jamie Chadwick, who hopped aboard the ART

Grand Prix-run Veloce machine – which gained a steer on set-up from a less busy Adrian Newey, who was in attendance – and fell 4.9s adrift.

X44's early success laid down the yardstick for RXR to match in its bid to seize the title as it lined up for the second semi. Kristoffersson launched superbly with hyperdrive to romp to an initial 2.3s lead as challengers Carlos Sainz Sr (Acciona Sainz) and Mattias Ekstrom (Abt Cupra) traded blows off the line. Sainz's better launch forced Ekstrom to sit in his muddy rooster tails. And when the Spaniard accidentally caught the speed limiter and slowed, Ekstrom careered into his rear.

Ekstrom reached for his wipers and then for hyperdrive in an attempt to pass on the inside, but Sainz shut the door before the Abt Cupra car vaulted into the air over the 5.4-metre 'Knife Edge' jump to shed its >>

UNDOING SOME OF THE GOOD WORK

This wouldn't be Extreme E in its first year without another alteration to the format. For Dorset, a new rule mandated the driver starting order for qualifying, the semi-finals and final. The result was that females would only compete against females and, after the driver swap, it would be a male-only contest to the flag in the last race of the day.

Alejandro Agag's reasoning was: "This was the teams. They asked for this. We decided to go to three laps [due to the short 2.36-mile course] and then one driver had to do two laps. My opinion was 'let them choose'. But the teams said, 'No, we want to alternate so females get two laps in the final.'"

But this worked to undo part of Extreme E's equality standpoint. The regulations required teams to hire one female and one male driver to promote greater participation through the elevation of role models.

As was seen increasingly as the season progressed, there was no emphatic trend in lap times that favoured one gender over the other. Chip Ganassi Racing's Sara Price was a match for anybody all year. In qualifying in Dorset, the individual lap times had Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky getting the better of JBXE team-mate Kevin Hansen and likewise for Xite Energy Racing, as Christine Giampaoli Zonca was quicker than Oliver Bennett.

Then there's what it meant to the likes of Catie Munnings, Jamie Chadwick and Molly Taylor as they – in their own words – were trading paint with their "heroes" in Sebastien Loeb and Carlos Sainz Sr. That was taken away for the Jurassic X-Prix.

Positive discrimination shouldn't need to exist, but we're hugely far from that being the case at present. It's a numbers game: if 1000 males take up karting to every female, the odds are massively skewed.

But where Extreme E had worked to further the cause, this change undermined the message – at an event featuring an FIA Girls on Track programme. And setting the social implications aside, it also removed an element of strategy from the racing.



Price hosts FIA Girls on Track



The X44 car scrabbles off into the lead in five-car final to decide title winner

now loosened bonnet. Then the front inverter started to pack up as a legacy of the earlier collision, and the recently crowned Pure ETCR champion was left with rear-wheel drive only.

That allowed Kristoffersson to finish his clean two-lap sprint with 3.8s in hand over Sainz before vacating the hot seat for Taylor. With Abt Cupra delaying its car at the driver swap to attempt to address the ailing drivetrain, before eventually releasing Jutta Kleinschmidt two minutes down, Taylor and Laia Sanz waltzed to the finish to reserve places in the final. This left one slot up for grabs, which went to Andretti United courtesy of Timmy Hansen and Catie Munnings coming out on top in the last-chance shootout on Saturday.

The 'GridPlay' popular vote rewarded effective polesitter and semi-final one winner X44 with the choice of starting slot, and Loeb and Gutierrez opted for the middle lane. RXR were one slot to the left and knew that fourth place would finish the job.

With females regulated to start for the climax, Gutierrez used hyperdrive to power ahead and decisively took the lead into the first corner, while Taylor endured a sluggish

opening stint. Meanwhile, a lightening launch for JBXE's Ahlin-Kottulinsky meant the car owned by Jenson Button peeled from the far-right side of the grid to demote Munnings for third. Ahlin-Kottulinsky then gave chase after Taylor, using hyperdrive to draw level with the Rosberg X Racing machine and slot into second place over the 23-degree 'Knife Edge' ramp.

As Gutierrez disappeared into a 6.4s lead for X44, RXR slipped back again when Munnings relegated Taylor. That left Acciona Sainz's Sanz to take the title away from Nico Rosberg's crew. But despite her vast improvement in time in Dorset, Sanz wouldn't be a factor – she spun to relieve the pressure on RXR. Taylor could close on her rivals too, as Munnings had to punch reverse after losing the rear end when she stamped on the brakes to avoid clattering into the JBXE car on the approach to the speed-limited driver-swap zone.

Gutierrez ended her two-lap stint with 3.3s in hand over JBXE when she vacated for Loeb, the spare-time orthodontist only narrowly missed by a recovering Munnings. As the Greenland-winning Andretti United car headed for its pitlane slot, Gutierrez leapt



Ekstrom bore the brunt of a collision with Sainz, who had hit his speed limiter



out of the way, but her seat cushion was still collected and dragged down the road.

Loeb belted aboard, waited for a jug of water to be thrown across the windscreen, emerged with a 4.4s margin to JBXE and duly converted the victory. That, combined with the bonus five points for setting the fastest time through the designated super sector and the season-long qualifying prowess, left X44 with 155 points.

Kristoffersson brought home the RXR car, which was late to the grid after a last-minute front inverter swap, across the line 15s down. Crucially, though, he had settled in that sufficient fourth place to also complete a tally of 155 points. And so for the second time in 2021, the four-time World Rallycross champion relied on countback – thanks to victories in Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Sardinia – to settle the championship outcome in his and Dakar Rally-bound Taylor’s favour.

“It was pretty intense, but we knew what we had to do,” said Taylor. “It would’ve been nice to be on the podium and we could’ve pushed for that. But we were trying to really make sure we could seal the championship by taking the minimum amount of risks.”

Team owner Rosberg added: “I’m so proud of our team. It’s been an intense season racing in some of the world’s most remote locations. This one is forever. Molly and Johan have been excellent all season and the whole team worked so hard for this title and did fantastic.”

And just for good measure, Kevin Hansen delivered second in the finale for JBXE to wrest third in the teams’ championship away from his brother Timmy and Munnings at Andretti United. Hamilton, Rosberg, Button – the three F1 champions Alejandro Agag had courted to his new disruptive series – finished 1-2-3 in the final teams’ table.

“That wasn’t on purpose, of course!” smiled Agag. 🍷



RESULTS ROUND 5/5, DORSET (GBR), 19 DECEMBER (FINAL)				
POS	DRIVERS		TEAM	TIME
1	Sebastien Loeb (FRA) Cristina Gutierrez (ESP)		X44	9m20.609s
2	Kevin Hansen (SWE) Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky (SWE)		JBXE	9m24.222s
3	Timmy Hansen (SWE) Catie Munnings (GBR)		Andretti United Extreme E	9m30.344s
4	Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) Molly Taylor (AUS)		Rosberg X Racing	9m36.407s
5	Carlos Sainz (ESP) Laia Sanz (ESP)		Acciona Sainz XE Team	9m51.710s

SEMI-FINAL ONE				
POS	DRIVERS		TEAM	TIME
1	Sebastien Loeb (FRA) Cristina Gutierrez (ESP)		X44	9m23.480s
2	Kevin Hansen (SWE) Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky (SWE)		JBXE	9m23.884s
3	Lance Woolridge (ZAF) Jamie Chadwick (GBR)		Veloce Racing	9m28.430s

Top two finishers move into the Jurassic X-Prix Final

SEMI-FINAL TWO				
POS	DRIVERS		TEAM	TIME
1	Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) Molly Taylor (AUS)		Rosberg X Racing	9m24.588s
2	Carlos Sainz (ESP) Laia Sanz (ESP)		Acciona Sainz XE Team	9m30.837s
3	Mattias Ekstrom (SWE) Jutta Kleinschmidt (DEU)		Abt Cupra	11m29.236s

Top two finishers move into the Jurassic X-Prix Final

SHOOT OUT				
POS	DRIVER		TEAM	TIME
1	T Hansen (SWE) Munnings (GBR)		Andretti United Extreme E	9m12.855s
2	Kyle LeDuc (USA) Sara Price (USA)		Segi TV Chip Ganassi Racing	9m13.316s
3	Oliver Bennett (GBR) Christine Giampaoli Zonca (ITA)		Xite Energy Team	10m45.871s

Decides the final points positions for the 7th, 8th and 9th place

QUALIFYING 1 1 Loeb/Gutierrez 9m19.985s; 2 Kristoffersson/Taylor 9m21.886s; 3 Sainz/Sanz 9m22.742s; 4 Ekstrom/Kleinschmidt 9m24.113s; 5 Woolridge/Chadwick 9m30.380s; 6 T Hansen/Munnings 9m32.103s; 7 LeDuc/Price 9m35.166s; 8 K Hansen/Ahlin-Kottulinsky 9m40.667s; 9 Bennett/Zonca 10m03.000s.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Loeb/Gutierrez 9m14.793s; 2 K Hansen/Ahlin-Kottulinsky 9m18.905s; 3 Sainz/Sanz 9m22.621s; 4 Kristoffersson/Taylor 9m23.338s; 5 Woolridge/Chadwick 9m26.744s; 6 Ekstrom/Kleinschmidt 9m34.366s; 7 Bennett/Zonca 9m36.257s; 8 T Hansen/Munnings 9m37.956s; 9 LeDuc/Price 9m51.431s.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Taylor/Kristoffersson 155; 2 Loeb/Gutierrez 155; 3 Ahlin-Kottulinsky 119; 4 T Hansen/Munnings 117; 5 K Hansen 102; 6 Ekstrom 100; 7 Sanz/Sainz 100; 8 Kleinschmidt 87; 9 Price/LeDuc 74; 10 Zonca/Bennett 63.

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Rosberg X Racing 155; 2 X44 155; 3 JBXE 119; 4 Andretti United 117; 5 Abt Cupra 100; 6 Acciona Sainz 100; 7 Veloce Racing 77; 8 Chip Ganassi Racing 74; 9 Xite Energy Racing 63.

SEASON REVIEW

6 JANUARY ISSUE

How Alejandro Agag's latest motorsport creation fared in its debut season, a lost champion team, the series' future prospects, and evaluating its eco credentials.

WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE MAGAZINE THIS YEAR, WHEN, AND BY WHOM

JA James Allen	HC Haydn Cobb	MHA Mika Hakkinen	SL Stephen Lickorish	HR Hal Ridge	LST Lawrence Stroll
BA Ben Anderson	SC Stuart Codling	RHG Rachel Harris-Gardiner	SM Stefan Mackley	NR Nico Rosberg	RT Rachit Thukral
RB Rodi Basso	AC Adam Cooper	BH Brian Harvey	DML David Malsher-Lopez	PS Peter Scherer	KT Kevin Turner
JBL Jake Boxall-Legge	LD Lewis Duncan	JH Johnathan Hoggard	HM Hugh Marshall	MSE Marco Seefried	JU Jim Utter
DB David Brabham	DE David Evans	TH Tom Howard	AM Andy Meyrick	JS Jeremy Shaw	NV Nelson Valkenburg
CB Charles Bradley	PF Paul Fearnley	AK Alex Kalinauckas	JNE James Newbold	MS Marcus Simmons	AVL Andrew van Leeuwen
SB Stephen Brunsdon	NG Nick Garton	MK Matt Kew	JNI Jake Nichol	DS Damien Smith	GW Gary Watkins
HCH Hugh Chambers	MG Maria Guidotti	JK Jamie Klein	JNO Jonathan Noble	LS Luke Smith	MW Megan White
KC Karun Chandhok	FH Ferdinand Habsburg	PL Paul Lawrence	MP Marcus Pye	RS Roger Smith	JW James Wingfield
JC Jack Clarke	MH Michael Haffenden		BR Brian Redman	HS Heiko Stritzke	TW Tim Wright

Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award
Contenders chosen (16 Sept)
Finalists selected (30 Sept)
How the finalists were put through their paces (18 Nov-**KT**)
The rising stars battling for £200,000 (16 Dec-**KT**)

Autosport Awards
Voting nominations (11 Nov)

Autosport Performance
Garmin’s data logger (24 June-**SM**)

British Touring Cars
The success of NGTC (11 Feb-**MS**)
Jeff Allam (18 Feb-**TH**)
Season preview (6 May-**MS**)
1. Thruxton (13 May-**MS**)
2. Snetterton (17 June-**MS**)
3. Brands Hatch (1 July-**MS**)
4. Oulton Park (5 Aug-**MS**)
Jake Hill’s rise (12 Aug-**MS**)
5. Knockhill (19 Aug-**MS**)
6. Thruxton (2 Sept-**MS**)
7. Croft (23 Sept-**MS**)
8. Silverstone (30 Sept-**MS**)
9. Donington Park (14 Oct-**MS**)
Making of Ash Sutton (21 Oct-**MS**)
10. Brands Hatch (28 Oct-**MS**)
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Townsend Bell (8 Apr-**JNE**)
Thomas Biagi (3 June-**JNE**)
Marcel Fassler (30 Sept-**MH**)

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A familiar COVID story (21 Jan-**SL**)
Should online scrutineering be permanent? (28 Jan-**SL/SM**)
Planning for the future (4 Feb-**SL**)
Livestreaming delight (11 Feb-**SL**)
Stronger together (18 Feb-**SM**)
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Waiting on the grid (1 Apr-**SL**)
The same but different (8 Apr-**MP**)
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A call for support (19 Aug-**DB**)
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So much still to play for (21 Oct-**SL**)
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Reflections on the season (9 Dec-**SL**)

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McLaren MCL35N (18 Feb)
Red Bull RB16B, AlphaTauri AT02, Alfa Romeo C41 (25 Feb)
Mercedes W12, Alpine A521 (4 Mar)
Aston Martin AMR21, Williams FW43B (11 Mar)
Ferrari SF21, Haas VF-21 (18 Mar)

FIA Formula 3
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2021 season preview (6 May-**MW**)
1. Barcelona (13 May-**MW**)
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3. Red Bull Ring (8 July-**MW**)
4. Hungaroring (5 Aug-**MW**)
5. Spa (2 Sept-**MW**)
6. Zandvoort (9 Sept-**MW**)
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4. Silverstone (22 July-**MW**)
5. Monza (16 Sept-**MW**)
6. Sochi (30 Sept-**TH**)
7. Jeddah (9 Dec-**TH**)
8. Yas Marina (16 Dec-**TH**)

Formula E
McLaren’s interest (4 Feb-**MK**)
Burgeoning Brit-pack (11 Feb-**MK**)
Season preview (25 Feb-**MK**)
1. Diriyah (4 Mar-**MK**)
2. Rome (15 Apr-**MK**)
3. Valencia (29 Apr-**MK**)
4. Monaco (13 May-**MK**)
5. Puebla (24 June-**MK**)
6. Brooklyn (15 July-**MK**)
7. London (29 July-**MK**)
8. Berlin (19 Aug-**MK**)
Season review (9 Sept-**MK**)

Grand prix features
Hamilton’s heirs (7 Jan-**LS**)
F1 1991 special (14 Jan-**KT/JBL/DS/CB/GW/JNE**)
What’s new for 2021? (21 Jan-**JBL**)
Williams revival (28 Jan-**AK/JNE**)
Williams performance history (28 Jan-**KT**)
Rise of McLaren (4 Feb-**LS**)
McLaren performance history (4 Feb-**KT**)

F1 rookie Tsunoda (4 Feb-**MS**)
Where Mercedes can trip up (11 Feb-**AK**)
What Red Bull must do to beat Mercedes (18 Feb-**AK**)
Big questions of 2021 (25 Feb-**KC**)
Ferrari recovery plan (4 Mar-**AK/LS**)
What Ferrari must do to win again (4 Mar-**RB**)
Aston Martin ready to deliver (11 Mar-**LS**)
‘Team Silverstone’ supertimes (11 Mar-**KT**)
F1 2021 test review (18 Mar-**AK**)
Enrique Bernoldi – part of F1’s greatest rookie crop (18 Mar-**JNE**)
F1 preview (25 Mar-**AK/LS/SC/JNO/TW/KC/JBL**)
Verstappen interview (8 Apr-**AK**)
How to fix the W12 (15 Apr-**AK**)
When Raikkonen was picked over Heidfeld (22 Apr-**AC**)
The rise of Norris (29 Apr-**AK**)
The Alonso legend (20 May-**AK**)
Benetton 2001 (20 May-**JNE**)
Russell interview (3 June-**AK**)
Ferrari’s recovery (17 June-**AK**)
F1’s three Brits (15 July-**AK**)
BRM’s last hurrah (12 Aug-**KT**)
Mick Schumacher interview (19 Aug-**AK**)
Michael Schumacher’s first 12 months in F1 (19 Aug-**AC**)
Jordan 191 track test (19 Aug-**KC**)
Hamilton 100 wins special (30 Sept-**AK/JNE/AC/CB/KT**)
McLaren revival (7 Oct-**AK**)
Lotus supertimes (7 Oct-**KT**)
Top 10 Lotus F1 cars (7 Oct-**KT**)
Hamilton and Verstappen: who’s going to win? (21 Oct-**AK**)
Merc mission control (4 Nov-**LS**)
Ferrari revival (2 Dec-**AK**)

Grand prix reports
1. Bahrain (1 Apr-**AK**)
2. Emilia Romagna (22 Apr-**AK**)
3. Portugal (6 May-**AK**)
4. Spain (13 May-**AK**)
5. Monaco (27 May-**AK**)
6. Azerbaijan (10 June-**AK**)
7. France (24 June-**AK**)
8. Styria (1 July-**AK**)
9. Austria (8 July-**AK**)
10. Great Britain (22 July-**AK**)
11. Hungary (5 Aug-**AK**)
12. Belgium (2 Sept-**AK**)
13. Netherlands (9 Sept-**MK**)
14. Italy (16 Sept-**AK**)
15. Russia (30 Sept-**AK**)
16. Turkey (14 Oct-**AK**)
17. United States (28 Oct-**AK**)
18. Mexico (11 Nov-**AK**)
19. Sao Paulo (18 Nov-**AK**)
20. Qatar (25 Nov-**AK**)
21. Saudi Arabia (9 Dec-**AK**)
22. Abu Dhabi (16 Dec-**AK**)

Have-a-go hero
Oliver Turvey (7 Jan-**MK**)
Stoffel Vandoorne (21 Jan-**MK**)

Andy Wallace (25 Feb-**JNE**)
Yelmer Buurman (11 Mar-**JNE**)
Michael Bartels (19 Aug-**JNE**)
Alan van der Merwe (7 Oct-**JNE**)
Nathan Freke (21 Oct-**JNE**)
Lucas Luhr (4 Nov-**JNE**)
Jan Magnussen (18 Nov-**SM**)

In defence of...
Luca Badoer (7 Jan-**JNE**)
Vauxhall Astra Coupe (14 Jan-**MK**)
1966 Monte Carlo Rally (21 Jan-**NG**)
‘Fernando is faster...’ (28 Jan-**LS**)
DRS (4 Feb-**SM**)
One-shot qualifying (11 Feb-**SC**)
Tight regulations (18 Feb-**KT**)
Webber’s Williams move (25 Feb-**JNE**)
Front torque transfer (4 Mar-**TW**)
Aerodynamics (11 Mar-**BA**)
Red Williams liveries (18 Mar-**JBL**)
Turbo-hybrid F1 (25 Mar-**KT**)
Formula 3000 (1 Apr-**JNE**)
Short race tracks (8 Apr-**CB**)
F1 rule changes (15 Apr-**KT**)
Drive to Survive fans (22 Apr-**MW**)
Whincup at Bathurst (29 Apr-**AVL**)
Balance of performance (6 May-**JNE**)
Track limits (13 May-**HC**)

IndyCar
McLaren aiming high (4 Feb-**DML**)
Jimmie Johnson’s new challenge (25 Feb-**DML**)
Season preview (15 Apr-**DML**)
1. Barber (22 Apr-**DML**)
2. St Petersburg (29 Apr-**DML**)
3. Texas (6 May-**DML**)
4. Indianapolis (20 May-**DML**)
Indy 500 preview (27 May-**DML**)
5. Indianapolis 500 (3 June-**DML**)
6. Detroit Belle Isle (17 June-**DML**)
7. Road America (24 June-**DML**)
8. Mid-Ohio (8 July-**DML**)
9. Nashville (12 Aug-**DML**)
10. Indianapolis (19 Aug-**DML**)
11. Gateway (26 Aug-**DML**)
12. Portland (16 Sept-**DML**)
13. Laguna Seca (23 Sept-**DML**)
14. Long Beach (30 Sept-**DML**)
Season review (4 Nov-**DML**)

In the paddock
Advice for a Ferrari star in waiting (7 Jan-**AK**)
The gap Aston Martin must address (14 Jan-**AK**)
MotoGP’s loss, F1’s gain (14 Jan-**LD**)
Mistakes Mercedes must avoid (21 Jan-**AK**)
Norris’s image battle (21 Jan-**LS**)
F1 calendar shuffling (28 Jan-**AK**)
Disruptor among the disruptive (28 Jan-**MK**)
Kiwis’ efforts bear fruit (28 Jan-**MS**)
Peak practice (4 Feb-**AK**)
A new way to spice up F1 (4 Feb-**RS**)
Hamilton’s title haul potential (11 Feb-**AK**)
Grosjean in IndyCar (11 Feb-**DML**)
Time for Ricciardo to shine again

(18 Feb-**AK**)
Pros and cons of F1’s rule changes (18 Feb-**RB**)
What next for Albon? (25 Feb-**AK**)
Motorsport’s newest challenge (25 Feb-**JC**)
Leclerc versus Sainz (4 Mar-**AK**)
Ferrari back in big time (4 Mar-**GW**)
Marquez’s return (4 Mar-**LD**)
What to look out for in F1 testing (11 Mar-**AK**)
‘Flash’ back in BTCC (11 Mar-**MS**)
Big push for Motorsport Games (11 Mar-**HCH**)
Murray Walker memories (18 Mar-**JA**)
We need to talk about Lorenzo (18 Mar-**LD**)
Fascination of team-mate fights (25 Mar-**AK**)
Make mistakes, get stronger (1 Apr-**AK**)
Entrepreneurial mindset (1 Apr-**RB**)
F1 2021’s crucial calls (8 Apr-**AK**)
Speeding to save trees (8 Apr-**FH**)
F1’s European spring (15 Apr-**AK**)
Alguersuari: rediscovering racing (15 Apr-**JNE**)
Much to enjoy at Imola (22 Apr-**AK**)
Football’s lesson from racing (22 Apr-**JNE**)
Challenges for F1’s star rookie (29 Apr-**AK**)
Wrong sort of attention (29 Apr-**MK**)
What Red Bull needs to change (6 May-**AK**)
A ride with a legend (6 May-**CB**)
Has Red Bull lost its advantage? (13 May-**AK**)
Time comparisons miss the point (13 May-**MK**)
Get rid of flawed F1 rule (20 May-**KT**)
A new life Stateside (20 May-**CB**)
Restricted development (20 May-**JK**)
Hard lesson for Leclerc (27 May-**AK**)
F1’s unsung star of 2021 (3 June-**AK**)
Lessons from Dupasquier’s crash (3 June-**LD**)
Changes behind ‘feel-good’ result (10 June-**AK**)
Focus on flexi-wings (10 June-**RB**)
Next big test for F1’s top teams (17 June-**AK**)
McLaren’s surprise electric move (17 June-**MK**)
Can Red Bull now win anywhere? (24 June-**AK**)
Russell’s crucial improvements (1 July-**AK**)
Drive for sustainability (1 July-**NR**)
Hamilton’s new contract (8 July-**AK**)
Pole position rethink (8 July-**KT**)
F1’s return to normality (15 July-**AK**)
Prelude to Hamilton/Verstappen Silverstone shunt (22 July-**AK**)
Drivers under pressure (29 July-**AK**)
Audi rights and wrongs (29 July-**MK**)
Regaining momentum (29 July-**JH**)
Was solo start good or bad for F1? (5 Aug-**AK**)
Why Bottas deserves more credit (5 Aug-**MHA**)

What Rossi has done for MotoGP (12 Aug-**LD**)
Argentina’s ‘other’ champion (12 Aug-**JNE**)
Nyck de Vries’s electric future (19 Aug-**MK**)
Life in the old dogs (19 Aug-**DML**)
Preparing an Am for Le Mans (19 Aug-**MSE**)
Standout memories of Le Mans 2021 (26 Aug-**GW**)
MotoGP belongs at Silverstone (26 Aug-**LD**)
Something worth celebrating (2 Sept-**AK**)
Zandvoort’s return (9 Sept-**MK**)
Hamilton’s legacy (9 Sept-**LS**)
Ricciardo’s turnaround (16 Sept-**AK**)
Ruining the title battle (16 Sept-**KT**)
Title fight is far from F1’s worst (23 Sept-**AK**)
Building the dream (23 Sept-**LST**)
Ferrari’s ‘other’ F1 star (30 Sept-**AK**)
A new IndyCar star (30 Sept-**DML**)
F1 2021’s countdown (7 Oct-**AK**)
Hauger’s fightback (7 Oct-**MW**)
‘Missing’ pole winners (14 Oct-**AK**)
Mental health in F1 (14 Oct-**LS**)
Remembering Dan Wheldon (14 Oct-**DML**)
The dangers behind Max’s words (21 Oct-**AK**)
A Sutton certainty? (21 Oct-**MS**)
F1’s compelling show (28 Oct-**AK**)
On track for a bright future (28 Oct-**JA**)
Whither the ‘F1 kingmaker’? (4 Nov-**RS**)
McLaren’s star across the pond (4 Nov-**LS**)
Not making errors when it matters (11 Nov-**AK**)
WEC’s unwelcome fight (11 Nov-**GW**)
Tarquini retires (11 Nov-**MS**)
New F1 tracks’ impact (18 Nov-**AK**)
A win-win showdown (18 Nov-**TH**)
Mistakes Red Bull cannot repeat (25 Nov-**AK**)
Inconvenient truth on penalties (25 Nov-**KT**)
Racer in purest sense (2 Dec-**KC**)
What now after Rossi? (2 Dec-**LD**)
The line finally crossed (9 Dec-**AK**)
A thriller, must be safer (9 Dec-**LS**)
The call Masi should have made (16 Dec-**AK**)

Introducing...

Jonny Edgar (18 Mar-**TH**)

MotoGP

Season preview (25 Mar-**LD**)
1. Losail (1 Apr-**LD**)
2. Losail (8 Apr-**LD**)
3. Algarve (22 Apr-**LD**)
4. Jerez (6 May-**LD**)
5. Le Mans (20 May-**LD**)
6. Mugello (3 June-**LD**)
7. Barcelona (10 June-**LD**)
8. Sachsenring (24 June-**LD**)
9. Assen (1 July-**LD**)
10. Red Bull Ring (12 Aug-**LD**)
11. Red Bull Ring (19 Aug-**LD**)
12. Silverstone (2 Sept-**LD**)
13. Motorland Aragon (16 Sept-**LD**)
14. Misano (23 Sept-**LD**)
15. Austin (7 Oct-**LD**)
16. Misano (28 Oct-**LD**)
17. Algarve (11 Nov-**LD**)
18. Valencia (18 Nov-**LD**)
Season review (2 Dec-**LD**)
Rossi’s greatest races (2 Dec-**LD**)

National focus

Radical track test (7 Jan-**BA**)
Prebble crowned 2020 club racing king (14 Jan-**MS/SM/SL**)

Praga in UK motorsport (21 Jan-**SL**)
How club racing fared in 2020 (28 Jan-**SL**)
2020’s new categories rated – and predictions for 2021 (6 Feb-**SL/SM**)
Getting back on track (11 Feb-**SM/SB**)
Sedgwick’s US dream (Feb 18-**SL**)
Racing for mental health (4 Mar-**SL**)
Ben Tilley’s ascendancy (11 Mar-**MP**)
Never-ending quest for safety (25 Mar-**SM**)
What we’re looking forward to this year (1 Apr-**SL/MP/SM/JNE/KT**)
GT Cup on a roll (8 Apr-**SL/SM**)
TOCA supports preview (6 May-**SL**)
British GT preview (20 May-**JNE**)
British F3 preview (20 May-**SM**)
TOCA supports preview part 2 (10 June-**SL**)
Living rallycross dream (17 June-**HR**)
Goossens at American Speedfest (1 July-**JNE**)
An American one-off (15 July-**SM**)
From racing F1 and F2 cars to rallying a Sunbeam (15 July-**PS**)
Using data to go faster (22 July-**JW**)
Silverstone Classic preview (29 July-**MP**)
Bevan Imp’s return (12 Aug-**MP**)
Rodin FZED (12 Aug-**TH**)
Brooklands’ British GP celebration (19 Aug-**RHG**)
F1000: reawakening of the Jedi battlers (16 Aug-**SL**)
Restorer and racer Geraint Owen (30 Sept-**SM**)
Hillclimb champion Wallace Menzies (7 Oct-**PL**)
Formula Ford Festival greats (28 Oct-**AVL/MS/KT/GW**)
How national driver rankings are shaping up (4 Nov-**MS/SL**)
TOCA supports review (11 Nov-**SL**)
British GT review (18 Nov-**JNE**)
GB3 review (18 Nov-**SM**)
Praga R1 track test (25 Nov-**BA**)
GB3 track test (2 Dec-**SM**)
How club racing thrived in 2021 (9 Dec-**SL**)

Obituaries

John Hogan (7 Jan)
John Paul Jr (7 Jan)
Brian Jones (7 Jan)
Brian Shead (7 Jan)
Pat Patrick (14 Jan)
Tony Vlassopoulos (14 Jan)
Hubert Auriol (14 Jan)
Ricky Parker-Morris (14 Jan)
Jurgen Hubbert (21 Jan)
‘Gimax’ (Carlo Franchi) (21 Jan)
John Aley (21 Jan)
Adrian Campos (4 Feb)
Alistair Walker (11 Feb)
Eddie Walder (18 Feb)
Chris Craft (25 Feb)
Fausto Gresini (25 Feb)
Les Ely (25 Feb)
Gerard McCosh (25 Feb)
Hannu Mikkola (4 Mar)
Wendy Markey-Amey (11 Mar)
Murray Walker (18 Mar)
Keith Greene (18 Mar)
Johnny Dumfries (25 Mar)
Manfred Kremer (25 Mar)
David Sutton (15 Apr)
Mick Nicholls (22 Apr)
Bill Whittington (6 May)
Bobby Unser (6 May)
Ray Allen (20 May)
Max Mosley (27 May)
Andre Ribeiro (27 May)
John Sprinzel (3 June)
Mansour Ojjeh (10 June)
Vince Woodman (10 June)
David Pierre (17 June)
Carlos Reutemann (15 July)

Martin Thomas (15 July)
Jean-Pierre Jausaud (29 July)
Graham McRae (12 Aug)
Bernard Cottrell (12 Aug)
Tony Broster (2 Sept)
Gerry Ashmore (9 Sept)
Gordon Spice (16 Sept)
Nino Vaccarella (30 Sept)
John Crowson (30 Sept)
Dessie Nutt (4 Nov)
Chris Smith (11 Nov)
Bob Bondurant (18 Nov)
Tony Dron (25 Nov)
Frank Williams (2 Dec)
Al Unser (16 Dec)

Pit+Paddock

Top BTCC team bought by rival (7 Jan)
Imola gets F1 slot (14 Jan)
Alpine/Lotus join McLaren in FE interest (21 Jan)
Button back at Williams (28 Jan)
F1 drivers’ COVID saga (4 Feb)
Hamilton commits for one more year (11 Feb)
Sprint races on cards for Canada, Italy, Brazil (18 Feb)
Albert Park layout tweaked (25 Feb)
Ferrari’s Le Mans attack (4 Mar)
Le Mans postponed (11 Mar)
Silverstone sprint possible (18 Mar)
‘Fastest ever’ street circuit (25 Mar)
F1 changes spark title fight (1 Apr)
Honda could find more F1 power (8 Apr)
Albon tests Ferrari as Paffett rejoins DTM (15 Apr)
Green light for Miami F1 GP (22 Apr)
London is on for Formula E (29 Apr)
Penske joins Porsche for Le Mans (6 May)
Red Bull poaches Mercedes staff (13 May)
British GP qualifying on Friday evening (20 May)
Dixon takes Indy 500 pole (27 May)
Dupasquier dies in Moto3 crash (3 June)
BMW eyes LMDh and Electric GT (10 June)
Silverstone’s crowd hopes (17 June)
Teams hit back at Pirelli tyre findings (24 June)
Silverstone to host full GP crowd (1 July)
Peugeot unveils new Le Mans contender (8 July)
IMSA commits to Le Mans Hypercars (15 July)
Red Bull to push for Hamilton sanction? (22 July)
Alfa eyes Bottas deal (29 July)
FIA: no new evidence from Red Bull (5 Aug)
McLaren’s Indy team stake (12 Aug)
Le Mans looks wide open (19 Aug)
Veloqx to bring Fangio name to WEC (26 Aug)
F1 commits to 22 races (2 Sept)
Russell to Merc as Bottas heads to Alfa (9 Sept)
Albon gets Williams seat (16 Sept)
Aston Martin ends Vettel exit speculation (23 Sept)
Miami GP date set for May (30 Sept)
Qatar gets 10-year F1 deal (7 Oct)
Andretti closes on Alfa F1 majority stake (14 Oct)
F1 crams 23 races into eight months (21 Oct)
Hulkenberg in Indy frame (28 Oct)
More sprints, points on cards for F1 (4 Nov)
Mercedes still upbeat (11 Nov)
Mercedes-Red Bull war escalates (18 Nov)

Brazil fallout confuses rules (25 Nov)
Masi explains F1 decisions (2 Dec)
F1 tensions soar (9 Dec)
Mercedes appeal throws F1 title in doubt (16 Dec)

Reports – miscellaneous

Daytona 24 Hours (4 Feb-**GW**)
Daytona 500 (18 Feb-**CB**)
Sebring 12 Hours (25 Mar-**GW**)
Nurburgring 24 Hours (10 June-**HS**)
Goodwood Festival of Speed (15 July-**TH**)
Spa 24 Hours (5 Aug-**GW**)
Silverstone Classic (5 Aug-**MP/KT**)
Goodwood Revival (23 Sept-**MP**)
Goodwood Members’ Meeting (21 Oct-**MP**)
Petit Le Mans (18 Nov-**JS**)
Bathurst 1000 (9 Dec-**AVL**)

Special features

Michael Ammermuller’s rise to Porsche stardom (7 Jan-**JNE**)
Extreme E’s equality stance (7 Jan-**JNE**)
First American to conquer Europe (7 Jan-**PF**)
1991 special (14 Jan-**DML/MS/KT/LD**)
Tandy’s enduro classics (14 Jan-**GW**)
Porsche star Harry King (21 Jan-**SL**)
Oliver Gavin retrospective (28 Jan-**GW**)
Daytona 24 Hours preview (28 Jan-**LS/GW**)
Dakar Classic in a 911 (4 Feb-**MG**)
Daytona 500 preview (11 Feb-**JNI**)
All-rounder Ellen Lohr (11 Feb-**JNE**)
Third generation Marshall (18 Feb-**MP**)
How Dale Earnhardt’s death changed motorsport (18 Feb-**CB**)
G-Drive and Aurus: early sportscar adapters (25 Feb-**NV**)
West Surrey Racing at 40 (4 Mar-**MS**)
Aston Martin’s greatest racing era? (11 Mar-**GW**)
DJR without Penske (11 Mar-**AVL**)
Brian Redman’s top 10 drives (11 Mar-**BR**)
Remembering Bob Wollek (18 Mar-**GW**)
Top 10 Le Mans Ferraris (1 Apr-**KT**)
GT star Raffaele Marciello (8 Apr-**JNE**)
F2’s heyday (8 Apr-**BH**)
Top 10 ‘F1 in F2’ races (8 Apr-**BH**)
Formula Regional by Alpine (15 Apr-**MS**)
Was Caracciola better than Nuvolari? (15 Apr-**PF**)
Triumph Dolomite Sprint special (22 Apr-**MS/KT**)
15 years of GT3 (20 May-**GW**)
Callum Ilott’s waiting game (27 May-**AC**)
Rowe Racing (3 June-**GW**)
Goodwood Festival of Speed preview (8 July-**MP**)
Remembering Mexico’s best racing driver (8 July-**KT**)
Pedro Rodriguez’s greatest races (8 July-**KT**)
Jeff Krosnoff remembered (15 July-**AC**)
Jaguar E-type at 60 (29 July-**BA/KT/PL**)
Karting in a good cause (2 Sept-**HC**)
Maserati MC12 retrospective (9 Sept-**JNE**)
Montoya’s magic moments (16 Sept-**CB**)
Goodwood Revival preview (16 Sept-**MP**)
Goodwood Members’ Meeting preview (14 Oct-**MP**)
Remembering Jo Siffert (21 Oct-**KT**)

BBM Sport’s success (18 Nov-**GW**)
Anthony Davidson calls time (2 Dec-**GW**)
The appeal of Brazilian Stock Cars (9 Dec-**JNE**)
Christmas gift guide (9 Dec)
Top 50 drivers of 2021 (16 Dec-**TH/ AK/MK/JK/DML/JNE/MS/DS/RT/JU/ AVL/GW/MW**)

Supplements

Engineering (18 Mar)
National (15 Apr)
Engineering (22 July)
Le Mans preview (12 Aug)
Formula E (25 Nov)

Top 5

Greatest BTCC cars (7 Jan-**KT**)
Williams Formula 1 cars (28 Jan-**KT**)
McLaren Formula 1 cars (4 Feb-**KT**)
Mercedes grand prix cars (11 Feb-**KT**)
Longest waits for a Cup win (18 Feb-**JNE**)
‘Team Silverstone’ Formula 1 cars (11 Mar-**KT**)
F1 to IndyCar drivers (13 May-**JNE**)

WEC

Toyota’s new Hypercar (21 Jan-**GW**)
Season preview (29 Apr-**GW**)
1. Spa (6 May-**GW**)
2. Algarve (17 June-**GW**)
3. Monza (22 July-**GW**)
4. Le Mans (26 Aug-**GW**)
Saving Toyota’s Le Mans (4 Nov-**GW**)
5. Bahrain (4 Nov-**GW**)
6. Bahrain (11 Nov-**GW**)
Season review (25 Nov-**GW**)

What could have been

Mitch Evans (14 Jan-**MK**)
Tom Ferrier (11 Feb-**JNE**)
Jorg Muller (20 May-**JNE**)
Michael Vergers (27 May-**JNE**)
Jean-Karl Vernay (10 June-**JNE**)
Warren Hughes (17 June-**JNE**)
Phil Glew (1 July-**JNE**)
David Sears (8 July-**MS**)
Emmanuel Collard (15 July-**JNE**)
Bertrand Baguette (22 July-**JK**)
Jamie Davies (29 July-**JNE**)
Jose Maria Lopez (5 Aug-**JNE**)
Max Wilson (12 Aug-**JNE**)
Nick Yelloly (26 Aug-**JNE**)
David Brabham (2 Sept-**JNE**)
Vitantonio Liuzzi (9 Sept-**JNE**)
The Mahindra sub role (16 Sept-**MK**)
Jackie Stewart (23 Sept-**KT**)
Nicolas Minassian (23 Sept-**JNE**)
Ash Sutton (28 Oct-**MS**)
Darren Manning (11 Nov-**JNE**)
Jamie Green (25 Nov-**JNE**)
Bjorn Wirdheim (2 Dec-**JNE**)

WRC

Season preview (21 Jan-**NG**)
1. Monte Carlo (28 Jan-**NG**)
Arctic Rally’s icy appeal (25 Feb-**DE**)
2. Arctic Rally (4 Mar-**NG**)
3. Croatia (29 Apr-**NG**)
4. Portugal (27 May-**NG**)
5. Italy (10 June-**TH**)
6. Safari (1 July-**TH**)
7. Estonia (22 July-**TH**)
8. Ypres (19 Aug-**TH**)
Ford’s new Puma Rally1 (12 Aug-**TH**)
9. Acropolis (16 Sept-**TH**)
10. Finland (7 Oct-**TH**)
11. Spain (21 Oct-**TH**)
Third-generation McRae (4 Nov-**TH**)
Hyundai’s dress rehearsal (11 Nov-**TH**)
12. Monza (25 Nov-**TH**)
Richard Burns’s top 10 rallies (25 Nov-**DE**)
Season review (9 Dec-**TH**)

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MONTH	DATE	VENUE	CATEGORY	SERIES	SERIES	SERIES
MARCH	15	GOODWOOD	TRACK DAY	HRDC	HRDC	HRDC
MAY	15	MALLORY PARK	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS
JUNE	11-12	THRUXTON	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS
JULY	3	LYDDEN HILL	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS
JULY	16-17	SNETTERTON	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS
JULY	30	OULTON PARK	RACE	JACK SEARS		
AUGUST	14	BRANDS HATCH	RACE			ALFAS
AUGUST	29	CASTLE COMBE	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS
OCTOBER	22-23	SILVERSTONE GP	RACE	JACK SEARS	ALLSTARS	ALFAS

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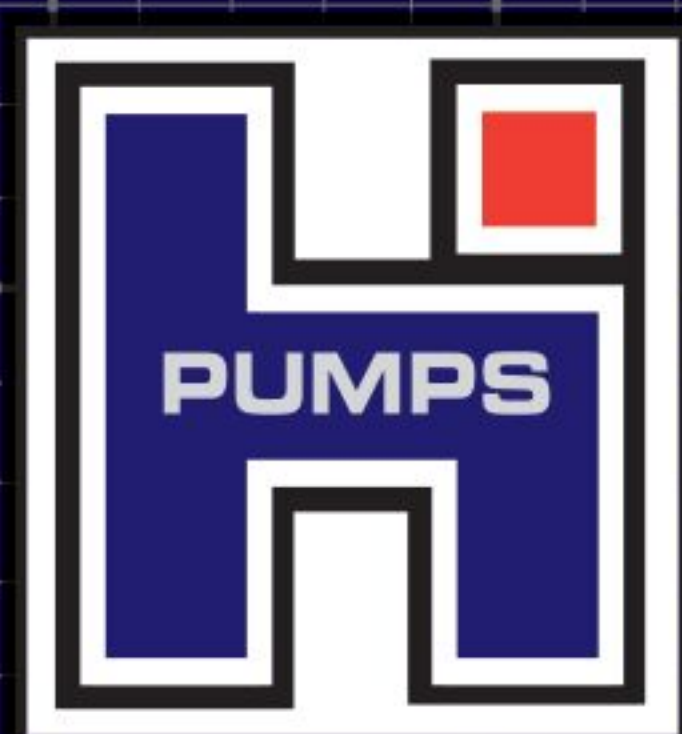
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- Strong problem solving skills
- To have a flexible attitude and ability to work as part of a team in a changing environment
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THE CHAMPIONS A rundown of the UK and Irish title winners

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NEW ANGLESEY 24-HOUR RACE FOR UNDER TWO-LITRE CARS

BARC

A new 24-hour endurance race for club racing machines powered by engines of less than two litres is due to run at Anglesey next year.

The British Automobile Racing Club-administered Club 24-Hour Race is the brainchild of Junior Saloon Car coordinator Dave Beecroft and is being organised by the same team that is behind the popular entry-level junior championship.

It will be open to a wide range of machinery, in contrast to one-make 24-hour races for Citroen C1s and 2CVs, but will not allow Caterhams as it is designed to feature cars of a similar performance. Beecroft wants the 23-25 September event to be club-focused and cost-effective and there is also due to be a funfair and live music at the Welsh track.

“The idea is to have a 24-hour race for cars that are under two litres and production-based, such as Mini Challenge cars, Hyundai Coupes, BMW 116s and Fiestas,” explained Beecroft, who first came up with the idea a few years ago, only to be scuppered at the time by a lack of 24-hour licences. “We will also have a class for 1600cc engines and under. There are plenty of long-distance races for big, powerful cars and there are endurance races for cars like C1s but there’s nothing in the middle.



New Club 24-Hour Race will be open to a variety of cars

“There’s lots of little tin-top races you can do with a Saxo but no long-distance races. Four guys can get together and spend £2000 per person and get a little car they can share and race for 24 hours. We did a social media soft launch about six weeks ago and we’ve had a lot of interest after it.”

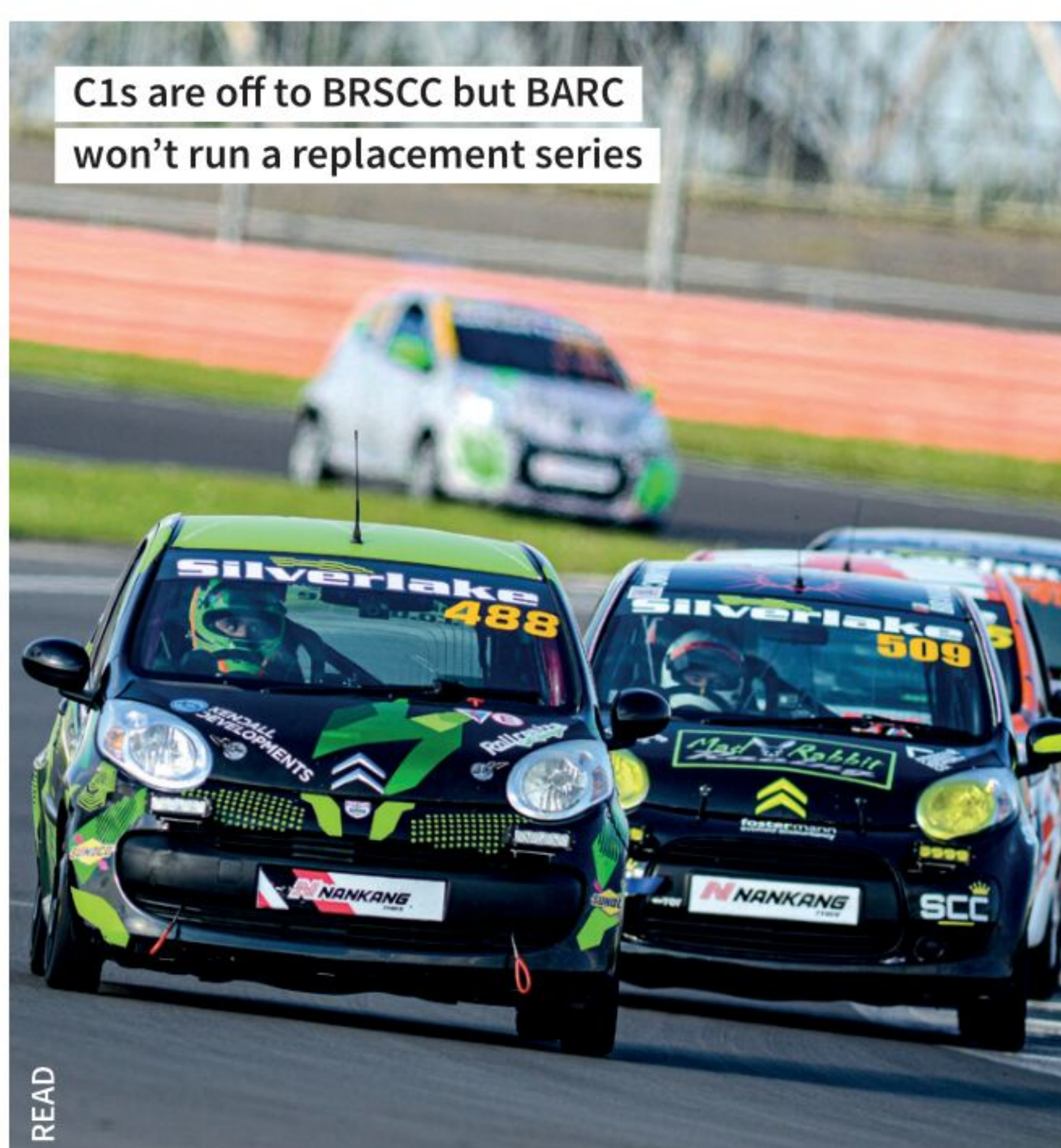
Beecroft says he will try to “accommodate as many people as we can” within the C24H class structure and is continually getting requests from

other categories to form part of the race.

Anglesey is one of the few UK circuits licenced to hold 24-hour races and Beecroft has agreed a five-year deal with the track’s bosses, believing it is a great venue for the C24H encounter.

“Anglesey is an under-utilised and overlooked circuit,” he said. “The venue itself is stunning and it’s a cracking circuit to drive. And the staff are very friendly and welcoming.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH



C1s are off to BRSCC but BARC won't run a replacement series

BARC chooses not to replace C1s

BARC

The British Automobile Racing Club has decided against introducing a new category to replace the C1 Race Series.

After the C1 Racing Club announced its series would move from the BARC to the British Racing and Sports Car Club’s portfolio for 2022 – C1 boss Robin Welsh having previously worked with key BRSCC

figures – the BARC had considered running a replacement. But it has now decided against creating a similar series of its own.

“We had a very good few years with the C1s and it was riding the crest of a wave at the time it launched and it picked up lots of energy and enthusiasm,” said BARC group chief executive Ben Taylor. “I don’t want to go up against the C1 club

and don’t think there’s enough demand for something like that. We had a look at it and a couple of opportunities but won’t be running something.”

Taylor added that one of the key elements of the C1 series was the 24-hour enduro and says the BARC’s involvement in the new Club 24-Hour Race (see above) is a good replacement to this.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Lind to defend British GT title with Barwell

BRITISH GT

Dennis Lind will again race alongside Leo Machitski in British GT next year as the pair will defend their title as part of an unchanged line-up at Barwell Motorsport, which also retains Sandy Mitchell and Adam Balon.

Cut from the Lamborghini factory roster in 2020, Lind contemplated retiring from motorsport before agreeing a deal with Barwell for 2021. He formed a well-balanced pairing with Machitski and took six fastest laps from the nine races en route to the title.

This led to opportunities for Lind in Europe with Audi customer teams WRT and Sainteloc, including an invitational outing in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup finale in Ingolstadt's latest



evolution of the R8 LMS GT3.

The Dane left the door open to remaining in British GT while exploring options for a full season in Europe, and has now signed a deal with German-based McLaren squad JP Motorsport to contest GTWCE Endurance alongside Christian Klien and Vincent Abril.

As the two SRO-run series do not clash, Lind is free to continue alongside Machitski, who confirmed to Autosport at the Donington Park finale (21 October) that he was intent on defending his crown.

"Dennis has attracted a lot of interest for what he achieved this season so I'm delighted that his other commitments won't prevent him from sharing the #1 car with me in British GT," Machitski said. "We worked really well together this year and I

see no reason why we shouldn't go into 2022 expecting to be contenders again."

Mitchell and Balon ended the 2021 season third in the standings with three second places, although scored maximum points at Silverstone as the winning 2 Seas Mercedes was a guest entry.

After a non-score in the first round at Brands Hatch "made 2021 an uphill struggle", Balon is targeting a strong start to the 2022 campaign.

"Sandy drove as well as anyone all season long and I feel a more complete driver now than at any stage of my career," said Balon. "We just need to hit the ground running and maintain that momentum against what I'm hearing will be a seriously competitive GT3 entry."

JAMES NEWBOLD

Team Parker to run new Porsche Cayman GT4

BRITISH GT

Team Parker Racing will return to the GT4 ranks of British GT next year with the new Porsche Cayman, with Ginetta Junior graduate Seb Hopkins announced as its first driver.

Stuart Parker's team, which is still expected to retain its presence in GT3, last entered a full season of GT4 in 2019 with its 2018 Pro-Am title-winning pair of Scott Malvern and Nick Jones with a Mercedes-AMG GT4.

Since then, Team Parker

has firmly aligned itself with Porsche and will give the 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport its series debut in 2022, the first time a Cayman has featured in GT4 since GT Marques ran Dino Zamparelli and Chris Car in 2019.

Hopkins finished third in Ginetta Junior this year, his second season in the category, scoring 11 podiums with Elite Motorsport. Autosport understands that a team-mate for the 15-year-old, who turns 16 on New Year's Eve, has already been signed.



"It's a massive opportunity for me and it was something that we weren't expecting to do, but we're going to do our best to do as well as we

possibly can," said Hopkins, whose father Jamie previously raced in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup.

JAMES NEWBOLD

Neate has been testing British F4's old car with the Argenti squad



Neate and McLaren junior are first British F4 drivers for 2022

BRITISH F4

McLaren junior Ugo Ugochukwu and 2021 podium finisher Aiden Neate have become the first two drivers announced to be racing in the revamped British Formula 4 championship next year.

The series is undergoing a raft of changes for 2022 to coincide with the introduction of the second generation of FIA F4 machinery. British governing body Motorsport UK has taken over as organiser, while the previous Mygale-Ford chassis/engine combination has been replaced by a Tatuus-Abarth.

Karting champion Ugochukwu will make his car racing debut in the category

next year, driving for the Carlin squad. "I feel very comfortable with Carlin and our pre-season preparations are already going well," said the American. "There will be a lot to learn but I have a great team around me to help deal with all the challenges."

Neate will continue to run with Argenti Motorsport having made his debut in the category part-way through 2021. He took three podiums in that time and has also contested French and UAE F4 races.

"I developed a lot as a driver across a part-season in the championship last year, and by the end we were regularly up front with the title contenders battling it out for podium finishes," said Neate. "I'm confident we can hit the ground running."

CDR signs Cresswell and Oxley

GB3

McKenzy Cresswell and Branden Oxley will drive for Chris Dittmann Racing in the GB3 Championship for 2022.

Cresswell will graduate from British F4 where he took six race wins – more than any other driver – and finished third in the standings during his maiden season of car racing with JHR Developments.

"The aim was always to step

up to GB3 and there were several options on the table," said the 15-year-old. "Over the past three years, CDR has been one of the most successful teams in GB3 with many wins and podiums. They also have a very collaborative and structured method for developing the car and driver so it's a great fit for me."

He will partner Oxley, who continues with CDR after a part-time campaign with the

squad in GB3 this year, where he took a best result of fourth.

Team principal Chris Dittmann said: "I'm really pleased to welcome Branden back to the team for the 2022 GB3 season. Through the four race weekends we worked together this year, he made massive progress and I've got every confidence that will continue to happen over the winter and into the new season."

IN THE HEADLINES

NEW SNETTERTON MEETING

Motor Racing Legends has released its 2022 calendar, which features a new meeting due to be held at Snetterton. The 16-17 July event, is set to include a three-hour Pall Mall Cup race, along with contests for Pre-War Sports Cars, Woodcote Trophy/Stirling Moss Trophy, Amon Cup, '60s Touring Car Challenge and Historic Touring Car Challenge. MRL's other regular meetings include the Donington Park Historic Festival, Thruxton Historic, Silverstone Classic and Spa Six Hours.

EXPANSION FOR FESTIVAL

The Historic Rally Festival, Britain's leading celebration of rallying heritage, will become a full two-day event in 2022 with a new high-profile venue and demonstration special stages in the dark. The event, scheduled for 15-16 October, will again be based around Weston Park in Shropshire, but organisers have also secured the use of the 350-acre site of the former power station in the nearby Ironbridge Gorge.

ROOKIE JOINS MINI TROPHY

Luca Marinoni Osborne will join Excel8 Motorsport in the Mini Challenge Trophy next season for his first full season of car racing. The 18-year-old has previously competed in karts and selected outings of the EnduroKa series. He said: "When we were looking at the options available to me for next season, it was the most attractive series in terms of costs and profile, but also offered me the greatest opportunity to grow and develop as a driver."

HEPWORTH TESTS NISSAN

Praga frontrunner Jem Hepworth was out testing Richard Wheeler's Nissan NISMO GT-R GT3 (below) at Donington Park earlier this month. "I would like to race this in Britcar next year, but have to see what we can work out," she said. Former British GT racer Angus Fender also drove the car.



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(HEADLINE ROUND)



16 & 18 APRIL
OULTON PARK
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



7/8 MAY
SILVERSTONE GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



28/29 MAY
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



25/26 JUNE
SNETTERTON 300
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



30/31 JULY
SILVERSTONE GP
(GB3)



10/11 SEPTEMBER
BRANDS HATCH GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



15/16 OCTOBER
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)

New races part of Members' Meeting line-up

GOODWOOD

Two new races, for chain-driven Frazer Nash cars of the pre-Second World War era and for production sports-racers of the 1950s, are due to join the all-star line-up for the Goodwood Members' Meeting next year.

The AFP Fane Trophy set for the 9-10 April event spotlights Archie Frazer Nash's hallowed marque's early history. Old Harrovian Alfred Fane Peers Agabeg – who raced as AFP Fane – drove Nashes with skill and bravado. In addition to contesting the 1932 German Grand Prix in the supercharged 'Nurburg', Fane starred at Shelsley Walsh and in the Mille Miglia.

Now, the ever-sideways Frazer Nash 'chain gangers' of the late 1920s and early 1930s enjoy huge popularity thanks to events such as the Freddie Giles Memorial Trophy race at Castle Combe. Expect to see the Nurburg, Super Sports, TT Replicas, Shelsley single-seaters and specials celebrating the Isleworth-based company,



whose Goodwood wins came with Bristol-engined Le Mans Replicas driven by Tony Brooks, Tony Crook, Roy Salvadori and Dickie Stoop in the 1950s.

Meanwhile, the Robert Brooks Trophy remembers a great friend of Goodwood who won 1998's inaugural Revival Meeting's Sussex Trophy race with his Lotus 15's rear wheelarch flapping. The celebrated auctioneer, taken early by cancer this year, was respected on both sides of the barriers. Aside from his racing, he masterminded many high-profile sales at Festival of

Speed, Revival and Members' Meetings.

The race in his name will bring back the sportscars Brooks adored – Lotus Elevens and 15s, Cooper T49 Monacos, Lola Mk1s and others – to recreate period British Automobile Racing Club Members' Meetings.

Among eventgoers' perennial favourites, the Gerry Marshall Trophy double-header for Group 1 saloons of 1970-82 reverts to its traditional two-driver VIP challenge on Saturday evening, and Sunday's reversed-grid sprint race for car owners.

MARCUS PYE

GT & Sports Car Cup to run at two Equipe events



GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

The GT & Sports Car Cup will have a different look in 2022, its promoters Flavien and Vanessa Marcais having forged a new relationship with Equipe Classic Racing.

The invitation series for charismatic Pre-1966 GT and Pre-'63 sports-racers will appear at Equipe's Oulton Park International and Silverstone Grand Prix events, after running at two

Historic Sports Car Club fixtures this year.

The series last visited Oulton in 2010, and capacity fields are predicted for the 90-minute contest on 21 May and the two-hour 11-12 June Silverstone event.

The GTSCC will also form the endurance feature at Castle Combe's popular Autumn Classic in September and will conclude with an October trip to the Algarve circuit.

"We are excited to be returning to Oulton and working with John Pearson and Rob Cull [of Equipe]," said Flavien and Vanessa.

"The GTSCC is a natural fit with Equipe's portfolio. The contrast between there [Oulton] and Silverstone will also be interesting for our competitors, for whom sporting excellence and social experience go hand-in-hand."

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Sprint will be held in Thirlestane Castle's grounds as event supports Race Against Dementia charity



New Scottish charity event to celebrate Stewart's career

SMRC

A new Scottish event celebrating the career of three-time Formula 1 world champion Jackie Stewart and raising money for his Race Against Dementia charity is due to be held next year.

The Sir Jackie Stewart Classic is scheduled to take place at Thirlestane Castle in the Scottish Borders on 18-19 June. As well as featuring cars and memorabilia connected to Stewart, there is also set to be a sprint along the castle's driveway organised by the Scottish Motor Racing Club and a classic car show from the Borders Vintage

Automobile Club. Other elements of the festival include a showcase of sustainable motoring technology and a retail and food village.

Stewart set up Race Against Dementia to help fund research into the treatment and prevention of the devastating condition following his wife Helen's diagnosis.

"This will be a world-class event at Thirlestane Castle showcasing Scotland's exceptional motorsports heritage in our own country," said Stewart. "I am delighted the Thirlestane team have chosen to support Race Against Dementia in this way, and feel proud and privileged to be a part of this great initiative."

O'Donovan wins Young Driver award

MOTORSPORT UK

Rising rallycross star Patrick O'Donovan has been crowned as Motorsport UK's Young Driver of the Year for 2021.

The award featured a shootout between five second-year drivers enrolled on Motorsport UK Academy's Enhanced

Diploma in Sporting Excellence course.

As well as giving a presentation about what they have learned from their studies, all five undertook a variety of fitness and simulator assessments at iZone earlier this month.

O'Donovan, who was champion of the RX150 buggy class of British Rallycross this year and also began competing on the world stage in the RX2e category, impressed the judges with his performances in the tests. He wins a bespoke driver development programme with iZone.

"It's truly amazing to be announced as the Motorsport UK Young Driver of the Year," said O'Donovan, whose father Ollie was British Rallycross champion in 2007. "I can't quite believe it to be honest! I've worked really hard to step up a level this year in my performances but there are so many talented young drivers around. It was a tough day at iZone in Silverstone for the finals with a lot of other competitive drivers and I'm so happy to win this award."



O'Donovan has competed in RX2e category this year

NORTHERN FF1600 RELAUNCHED AS PRE-'99 SERIES

FORMULA FORD

Northern Formula Ford 1600 has been relaunched as the Super Classic Pre-'99 FF1600 Championship for next season and will no longer feature current machinery.

The British Racing & Sports Car Club series was rebadged as Northern and Super Classic FF1600 two years ago and, since then, an ever-decreasing number of modern cars have entered. Amid this shift, along with MotorSport Vision Racing scrapping Heritage Formula Ford (which has morphed into the wide-ranging United Formula Ford initiative), the BRSCC decided to bring forward its plans to drop Northern FF1600.

The Super Classic series is open to any cars built before 1999 and is split into four different age-based classes. While it features a northern-focused calendar for 2022, it is set to become a UK-wide contest the following year.

"We were already weening Northern into Super Classic," explained BRSCC chairman Peter Daly. "We've seen a gap and want to give it a good go [earlier than planned]. There's plenty of cars out there and of the cars between 1985/'86/'87 up to '95/'96 there's not a massive difference in their performance in the right hands. Our target is to get 18 to 25 cars with each of the rounds."

Daly says the move has drawn a mixed response from competitors, with some very positive comments received, while some of the northern-based modern car owners are disappointed. But he added that a series cannot be built around this small number of drivers.

STEPHEN LICKORISH





Memories of a mixed 2021

The lingering impact of the pandemic meant overseas travel was still difficult, but there was plenty of fantastic racing here in the UK this year

MARCUS PYE

The 2021 season featured a return to some semblance of reality in the club and historic motorsport arena. Unlike its COVID-lashed predecessor, which started three months late, a full calendar of events was run. For me, though, it was a different one. If not chronicling Goodwood's Revival or Members' Meeting from a commentary box for the first time altered its dynamic, missing an overseas long-haul trip and the reinstated Spa Six Hours – which I'd attended from 1997-2019 – due to travel logistics was disappointing. Nonetheless, a full domestic programme demonstrated how fortunate we are to have so many great venues within easy reach. British events and a European surprise provided plenty of enjoyable action.

Bryant Cobra lands TT Celebration

Olly Bryant's RAC TT Celebration victory at Goodwood stands as the sporting highlight of my year. Time and again I'd witnessed Olly and various partners work their way into contention for the Revival's blue-riband GT race, only for the gallant AC Cobra to be robbed by late dramas or mechanical failures. Three seconds – the first with dad Grahame and Bill Shepherd in 2004 – were as close as Roy Salvadori's 1964 TT retiree came, but in September the stars aligned. Darren Turner relayed a healthy snake to Bryant Jr, who thundered to the chequered flag. A fortnight later, his Spa Six Hours GT40 duck was also broken...

Colin Turner visits Silverstone Classic

Eight months after he lost his lower legs following a ghastly accident in the 2020 Walter Hayes Trophy Formula Ford event, veteran Scot Colin Turner's return to thank marshals and medics at the Silverstone Classic was my season's grounding moment. The septuagenarian's determination to race again is remarkable, founded on unshakeable Christian faith and fierce independence. Buoyed by Nigel and Callum Grant's early offer of a test in their Historic Merlyn, the indomitable Colin started building a replacement Ray this summer. His Facebook updates constantly inspire many facing challenges and will surely drive brilliant prosthetists to develop ever better artificial limb functionality, making motorsport as accessible as others.

Screaming Formula 2 cars thrill anew

Standing at the end of Silverstone's traditional pitlane watching the Historic F2 cars file out for qualifying at the Historic Sports Car Club's International Trophy meeting in May was a treat for anybody fortunate enough to have been around the European championship in the later 1970s. A fleet of iconic and distinguishable cars – five March 782s heading the local Bicester brigade, assorted Chevrons from B42 to B27, a trio of Ralts, plus Brabham, GRD and Motul chassis – was unlike current frontline categories. Add earlier 1600cc F2s and Formula





Fitz-Simon was one of the Historic FF1600 stars this year

Atlantics, now on the up, and the spectacle was superb. If only the weather had been kinder...

Molly Dodd's FF2000 breakthrough

Like most of her Historic FF2000 rivals I venture, I'd not heard of Molly Dodd prior to her slicks-and-wings championship debut at Snetterton in a smoky Royale RP27. But I saw tenacity and potential in the 18-year-old Junior Saloon graduate's driving immediately. Robbed – by a transponder glitch – of what would have been her first win in a tough Brands Grand Prix heat, her hunger intensified. At Oulton Park, iZone apprentice Dodd's combative nature fuelled another charge. Ask former champion Benn Simms, who worked very hard to pass her. Fourth in the points was an impressive opening gambit. A future W Series contender?

Classic Special Saloons at Donington

Club racing has been close to my heart since the 1960s, and my favourite fix of 2021 was the Classic Sports Car Club's Donington dazzler in May, which attracted almost 500 entries, including a fine Special Saloons & Modsports pack. The Castrol-flavoured lead tussle between Joe Ward in Baby Bertha – the Chevrolet V8-engined Vauxhall Firenza in which Gerry Marshall was rarely beaten with Australian Holden Repco F5000 power in the mid-1970s – and fellow veteran Malcolm Harding's

Ford Escort Zakspeed tribute was a joy to behold. The sheer variety of machinery at CSCC events is awesome. Unfamiliar territory? Check one out in 2022.

Harrison and Fitz-Simon on FF1600 pace

Exceptional teenage driving talent emerging through Historic Formula Ford is nothing new – witness 2008 champion Michael Lyons, who added all three Monaco GP Historique F1 races to his CV this spring – when traditional contemporary routes are unavailable. This term Samuel Harrison and Horatio Fitz-Simon proved they could run with anybody in their first full seasons. Elden Mk8-mounted Harrison's pursuit of triple champion-elect Cam Jackson (Winkelmann) at Cadwell Park was stunning. Fitz-Simon, in Mike O'Brien's lead Classic Team Merlyn Mk20A, kept Jackson and Tom McArthur (Titan Mk4) in sight to the end. After trials and wins, Harrison replaces modern-bound Fitz-Simon for 2022.

Monaco 500 back out at Goodwood

Young Stirling Moss's dominant 500cc victory at Goodwood's first meeting in September 1948 demonstrated supreme talent. October's 78th Members' Meeting was the first without the maestro, who often celebrated his birthday at the Revival, but died last April, aged 90. The superb Don Parker Trophy race's field included the tiny Monaco-Norton – built in >>



Inspirational Turner has been plotting a comeback



Short-wheelbase Monaco-Norton was in action at Members' Meeting



The 750 Formula racing at Mallory was exceptional

JONES

Watford by a company headed by John Wyer – in which George Hartwell finished seventh in 1948. With its five-foot wheelbase, the Monaco carried Hartwell and Claude Tipper to Brighton Speed Trials class wins 30 miles away in 1948 and 1949. It was retired in 1953, then resurrected by David Baldock. Angus Frost drove it this time.

750 Formula joyride at Mallory

The evolution of onboard cameras over 20 years, since GoPro joined racers' parlance, has been staggering, particularly in terms of stability and resolution. Unobtrusive and inexpensive, now a large proportion of club racers rely on them for post-race analysis. Proving you don't need the quickest cars to have enormous fun was 10-time 750 Formula champion Mick Harris, who raced wife Sue's Darvi 597 this season. Mick's race with 2021 champ Peter Bove (Darvi), former title winner Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV) and Chris Gough (CGR2 Evo) at Mallory Park in October made enlightening Facebook viewing as the 1100cc Fiat-engined momentum meisters jostled racelong. Magical!

Walter Hayes Trophy comes of age

Missing the 50th British Racing & Sports Car Club Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch in October, which the faithful

branded a classic, was disappointing. However, I made it to Silverstone the following week – coincidentally for the fourth weekend in five! – for the 21st Walter Hayes Trophy. James Beckett's brainchild, debuted in 2001, climaxed the Kent-engined season in style. American teenager Max Esterson rode out triumphant in a Low Dempsey Racing Ray, weathering immense pressure in a super-clean finale. The Team USA Scholarship, founded by my old Autosport colleague Jeremy Shaw, and funded by a raft of partners, now has four WHT golds in its quiver.

Baby Van Diemen reminds me of 1981

It's 40 years since my racing debut at Thruxton in 1981, driving Clive Wood's Pine City Racing Van Diemen RF80. When team-mate Richard 'Pink Panther' Twinam told me F1 model maker Matt Chinn was mastering a 1/20 scale RF80 as his first release, I ordered one to reflect a wonderful day in my life. Having arranged Chinn's visit to an RF80 owner for dimension checks, I took delivery last month and the attention to detail, beneath removable body panels, is mindblowing. For the cost of a current race entry, fanatically tailored and decalled to spec, it's something to treasure. 🏆



Pye was delighted with model of Van Diemen RF80, the first car he ever raced

MAWP+SPORT

Autosport's highlights from the year

Some dramatic Ginetta Junior action, thunderous Ford GT40s and a very special Saloons & Modsports race provided memorable moments of the season

STEPHEN LICKORISH, STEFAN MACKLEY AND MARK PAULSON



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



STEPHEN LICKORISH
GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

Some races stick in your mind for all the wrong reasons but one that should be remembered in the best possible way is the third Ginetta Junior race at Donington Park this year. It featured one of the most thrilling lead battles I've seen for a long time as title rivals Aston Millar and Liam McNeilly were inseparable, continually swapping places. But, most importantly, the respect between the pair was obvious – Messrs Verstappen and Hamilton could learn a thing or two from these teenagers. And, despite the intensity of their squabble, they were still able to build a gigantic 10-second lead over the rest of the pack. Just brilliant.



STYLES



STEFAN MACKLEY
DEPUTY NATIONAL EDITOR

My favourite moment of 2021 is a close one between the Amon Cup at the Donington Park Historic Festival and the 50th running of the Formula Ford Festival. The former – which coincidentally was my most anticipated event – just takes the spot – watching the likes of three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden sliding out of Redgate at the wheel of a Ford GT40 with flames spitting and V8 engine growling was magical. The event was capped off by chatting with Alex Amon, son of ex-Formula 1 driver and 1966 Le Mans 24 Hours winner Chris, and what his dad would have made of the race named in his honour.



HAWKINS



MARK PAULSON
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

A record 40-car entry of Special Saloons and Modsports cars for the Ricky Parker-Morris memorial race at Brands Hatch paid fitting tribute to the series' prime mover, who tragically died after contracting COVID-19 earlier in the year. The terrifically varied entry made for a stirring sight on the Grand Prix circuit, and produced a thrilling race with multiple lead changes. Sam Wilson carved through from sixth on the grid to win in Rikki Cann's Aston Martin V8 Vantage, but there was barely a dry eye in the paddock after Ricky's brother Danny Morris's fine drive to second in the Spirit of RPM Peugeot 309 Cosworth the pair had previously shared.

TOP 10 CLUB DRIVERS OF 2021

There's been no shortage of stand-out performers over the course of this season. Here are some of the very best

ENTRIES BY PAUL LAWRENCE, MARK LIBBETER, STEFAN MACKLEY, JASON NOBLE, MARK PAULSON, IAN SOWMAN AND STEVE WHITFIELD



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

10

ALEX WALKER
BRSCC NATIONAL FF1600

Alex Walker's National Formula Ford 1600 title campaign may have ended in disappointment, but he still made his mark during a strong year in which he scored more poles and wins than anybody else. A switch to Kevin Mills Racing immediately yielded success, with three victories in a row, including a storming drive from eighth at Donington Park. After a difficult couple of rounds mid-season, Walker bounced back with a run of five wins from seven races, before two collisions at the finale cost him the crown.



HAWKINS

9

LEWIS THOMPSON
BRSCC CATERHAM SEVEN 310R

Missing the season opener – the only triple-header – to focus on his A-levels wasn't an ideal way to begin a championship challenge in Caterham 310Rs. But for Lewis Thompson it proved to be little hindrance, and he stormed to victory in the next eight races. The tiniest of blips next time out at Snetterton, where Thompson was twice edged by Pete Walters, was followed by domination of the Cadwell Park finale, and the youngster stylishly took the title in an otherwise very competitive category.



STYLES

8

CHARLIE HAND
BARC JUNIOR SALOON CARS

After finishing third in the Junior Saloon Car Championship last year, Charlie Hand was expected to be among the favourites for title honours in 2021. He duly delivered, but it was the manner of his triumph that really stood out. Of the 19 races, Hand won 14 against a packed field, including consecutive hat-tricks at Silverstone and Pembrey mid-season. Off the podium in only one race all year, the Crawley-based teenager capped his year in fitting style by winning both races at the Brands Hatch finale.



JONES

7

LEE MORGAN
750MC F1000

F1000 has come a long way since Lee Morgan last won the title in 2013, with stronger – and 70% bigger – grids. He added a further five wins to the 36 he'd amassed previously, the majority coming in the first half of the season. But Morgan needed to show great tenacity in the concluding events. A clutch failure at Oulton Park left the Snetterton finale wide open and, in spite of a coolant leak, a startline stall and a pitlane start there, Morgan clung on as rival Dan Gore had an even more disastrous weekend.



6

MILES RUDMAN
 BARC LEGENDS CARS

Securing a second title in a championship as competitive as Legends is no mean feat, yet Miles Rudman arguably made it look easy. Rudman finished down in fourth in 2020, albeit just 65 points off the top, but was unstoppable this year, securing 17 wins and a further 15 podiums across 48 races. The highlight was at Donington Park, where he took five wins from six. His closest challenger was four-time champion John Mickel, but he couldn't stop Rudman securing the title with two races to spare.



4

ALISTAIR CAMP
 CTA CIVIC CUP AND 750MC HOT HATCH

Twin attacks on the Civic Cup and Hot Hatch championships proved fruitful for Alistair Camp. Last year's Civic Cup runner-up was the man to beat from the word go in 2021, winning the opening six Hot Hatch races and half of the first 10 in Civic Cup. A slight dip in form allowed Class C dominator David Drinkwater to snatch a third successive overall crown in Hot Hatch, but Camp still claimed Class A and overcame final-round mechanical dramas to thwart Matt Luff's challenge for the Civic Cup title.



2

CAM JACKSON
 HSCC HISTORIC AND CLASSIC FF1600

He's been the most prolific winner in historic junior single-seaters of the past four or five seasons, but Cam Jackson didn't set out to take a title in 2021. Even so, he still ended up with his third Historic Formula Ford crown, continuing his strong partnership with preparer Neil Fowler. This year, he started doing some Historic FF1600 races and won eight of the first nine. He missed four due to moving house and racing at Goodwood, but came back for the finale and beat Tom McArthur by eight points.



5

SAM KIRKPATRICK
 MGCC MG TROPHY AND EQUIPE GTS

While Fred Burgess proved to be a worthy adversary, no one could match the stunning form of university student Sam Kirkpatrick in the MG Trophy. The Cumbrian took his ZR 190 to seven pole positions and seven wins from the first eight races, and secured the title with a weekend to spare. That allowed him to focus on his love of the family MGB, which he duly took to a double triumph in Equipe GTS at Snetterton, having also starred in Equipe's three-hour relay race at Donington Park in the summer.



3

OLIVER ALLWOOD
 BRSCC MAZDA MX-5

Oliver Allwood briefly held the Mazda MX-5 Championship title last year, only to have it taken away after a rival's penalty was overturned on appeal. After a consistent start, 2021 momentum began to shift his way at Cadwell Park, where he sealed an emphatic clean sweep to close on Jack Brewer. Allwood got the better of his rival again during three feisty Donington Park contests and, helped by an army of AB Motorsport team-mates, came out on top at the Brands Hatch finale to make sure of his first crown.



1

STEVEN DAILLY
 BRSCC BMW COMPACT CUP AND BARC GINETTA GT5

Another year and another dominant Steven Dailly display in the BMW Compact Cup. There were 10 wins from 14 races for the Scot but, even on the days when he wasn't winning, there were top-drawer drives. These included a super Donington Park recovery from last to third after gearbox dramas first time around. But what made this year extra-special was his one-off Ginetta GT5 Challenge outing at Croft. A double pole and race-two victory, with little testing, showed he is surely destined for more in 2022.

TOP 10 CLUB RIVALRIES OF 2021

Whether they've featured nervewracking finales, clashing contenders or battles with the elements, there have been plenty of close tussles this year

ENTRIES BY STEVE HINDLE, PAUL LAWRENCE, STEPHEN LICKORISH, MARK PAULSON, IAN SOWMAN AND STEVE WHITFIELD

10

AARON COOKE vs SHAUN TRAYNOR

A change of car adds to the intrigue in Toyota MR2 fight as the 2020 champion faces the long-time dominator

The reigning champion took on the four-time title winner in Toyota MR2s, both mounted in the latest Roadster model. Aaron Cooke won the 2020 crown in a Mk2 but adapted quickly to the lighter car and took on Shaun Traynor in intense battles: more than half of the races had them finishing 1-2. Cooke (leading Traynor, below) was ahead by the penultimate meeting, but a car change for that event provided added impetus and he beat Traynor in each of the next three races to triumph with an Oulton race to spare.



JONES

9

SIERRA RS500s vs NISSAN SKYLINES

The two star tin-tops of the late 1980s are now enjoying the kind of battles they never had in the UK in period

It never happened in the UK in period, but battle was joined between the Ford Sierra RS500 Cosworths and the Nissan Skyline R32s this season. The two giants of late 1980s touring car racing locked horns 13 times across the Motor Racing Legends Historic Touring Cars and Historic Sports Car Club Dunlop Saloon Car Cup. It was a glorious sight as fire fought fire, though the Skylines delivered the biggest flames. In terms of race wins, it was also a Japanese victory: the Skylines topped the Sierras nine to four.



JEP

8

ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY vs STORM ARWEN

The harshest of weather challenges organisers and crews

Storm Arwen did its best to derail the biennial Roger Albert Clark Rally. As evening fell on the second day of the five-day epic, blizzard conditions and then storm force winds arrived. Rally manager Colin Heppenstall called a halt to the event, but soon trees were coming down and some competitors and officials were stranded, many taking refuge at Langholm's Crown Inn. The Scottish leg was lost completely, and trees down in Wales threatened the rest of the event, but a mighty effort got the rally back on track.



MOON

7

MIKE WILLIAMS vs MORGAN SHORT

It's little v large as Metro battles ZS in the MG Cup, and the cars' contrasting strong points create a fascinating contest

In a classic case of cars with differing strengths, reigning class champion Mike Williams's nippy Rover Metro took on the beefier – and heavier – MG ZS of Morgan Short, with the Rover Tomcats of Matt Simpson and Richard Buckley also in the mix. Sophomore Short, stepping up from a Rover 216 GTI, was often quicker over a lap, but Williams made experience count to keep his Metro on the ragged edge and rack up seven wins on his way to the title, Short's mid-season engine troubles denting his challenge.



WALKER

6

DAN ZELOS vs MAX BIRD*The Mini Challenge all comes down to the last race, and a close squabble at the front makes for a nervy conclusion*

The Excelr8 team-mates did not have many on-track battles in the Mini Challenge this year, but that didn't stop their title rivalry going down to the wire. After Max Bird had pecked away at Dan Zelos's points advantage, it was all about the Brands Hatch decider. This was one of those tension-filled races where you could never be quite sure which way the title would go as the contenders were in a bunch of cars engaged in a thrilling battle. But Zelos (below) did enough – second place to Bird's fifth gave him the crown.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

4

LEE FERN vs NEIL HARRISON*The very last lap of the season proves crucial in splitting the Monoposto F3 pair after extraordinarily close title tussle*

This past year has shown that anything can happen in title deciders, and the Monoposto F3 showdown could not have been closer. With dropped scores applied, Lee Fern (Dallara F301) ended the year level on points with Neil Harrison (F302), with the crown going Fern's way on countback. But that only tells half the story. The tiebreak occurred after a crucial final lap of the season at Donington Park, on which Fern (leading Harrison, below) set the fastest lap and benefited from a rival's spin to claim the points he needed.



READ

2

MATT WRIGLEY vs ANDREW SMITH*An all-important fastest lap is all that separates the Historic F2 protagonists after engine dramas intervene*

COVID-19 wrecked the pan-European Historic F2 schedule. Instead, eight UK races and a late-season Dijon trip set up a mighty contest between Matt Wrigley (March 782) and Andrew Smith (742). Each took a Silverstone Classic win, Wrigley's (leading Smith, below) by half a second. Oulton Park was a disaster for Wrigley with engine woes; Smith won the opener before losing an engine in race two. That kept Smith away from Dijon, where Wrigley took the Bruno Giacomelli Trophy with the fastest lap point.



LAWRENCE

5

STEPHEN PRIMETT vs MARK LUCOCK*The Escort Mk1 pair are evenly matched and often inseparable in Pre-'83 Classic Touring Cars*

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club's championship for pre-1983 cars was highly competitive, but the Ford Escort Mk1s of Stephen Primett (below, right) and Mark Lucock were rarely far from the front – or each other; they finished less than a second apart on five occasions. While each suffered misfortunes along the way, a sticking throttle at the final round ultimately proved costly for Lucock. Multi-champion Primett was able to overhaul his points advantage to claim another title and the £1250 prize.



JONES

3

JENSON BRICKLEY vs DEAGEN FAIRCLOUGH*Fiesta Junior contenders come to blows on more than one occasion before rivalry is negated by scoring regulations*

Jenson Brickley ultimately took a comfortable and well-deserved Fiesta Junior title, but the season will be remembered for the fierce battle he had with Deagen Fairclough. There was little to separate the pair as they won the majority of the races between them. Tensions rose following a final-corner collision at Cadwell Park, and was followed by further clashes at Donington. But the contest was defused when Fairclough (right, below) lost his points from the opening round, where he had been a guest entry.



READ

1

ANDREW JORDAN vs AARON SMITH vs ENDAF OWENS*Mini Miglia's pocket-rockets continue to deliver close racing*

Reigning Mini Miglia champion Aaron Smith had his sights firmly on title number four, but former British Touring Car ace Andrew Jordan and 2011 champion Endaf Owens set about delivering three and four-wide battles at seemingly every turn. Jordan's pace, nerve and use of the Dunlop slicks eventually won through, despite sharing five wins apiece with Owens (the Welshman made fewer starts). The highlight came at the Brands Hatch Mini Festival, where they traded paint and places in a breathtaking clash.



HAWKINS

CLUB AUTOSPORT PICTURES OF THE YEAR

Come rain or shine, Autosport's national photographers have been on duty at race meetings across the season to capture all the best action

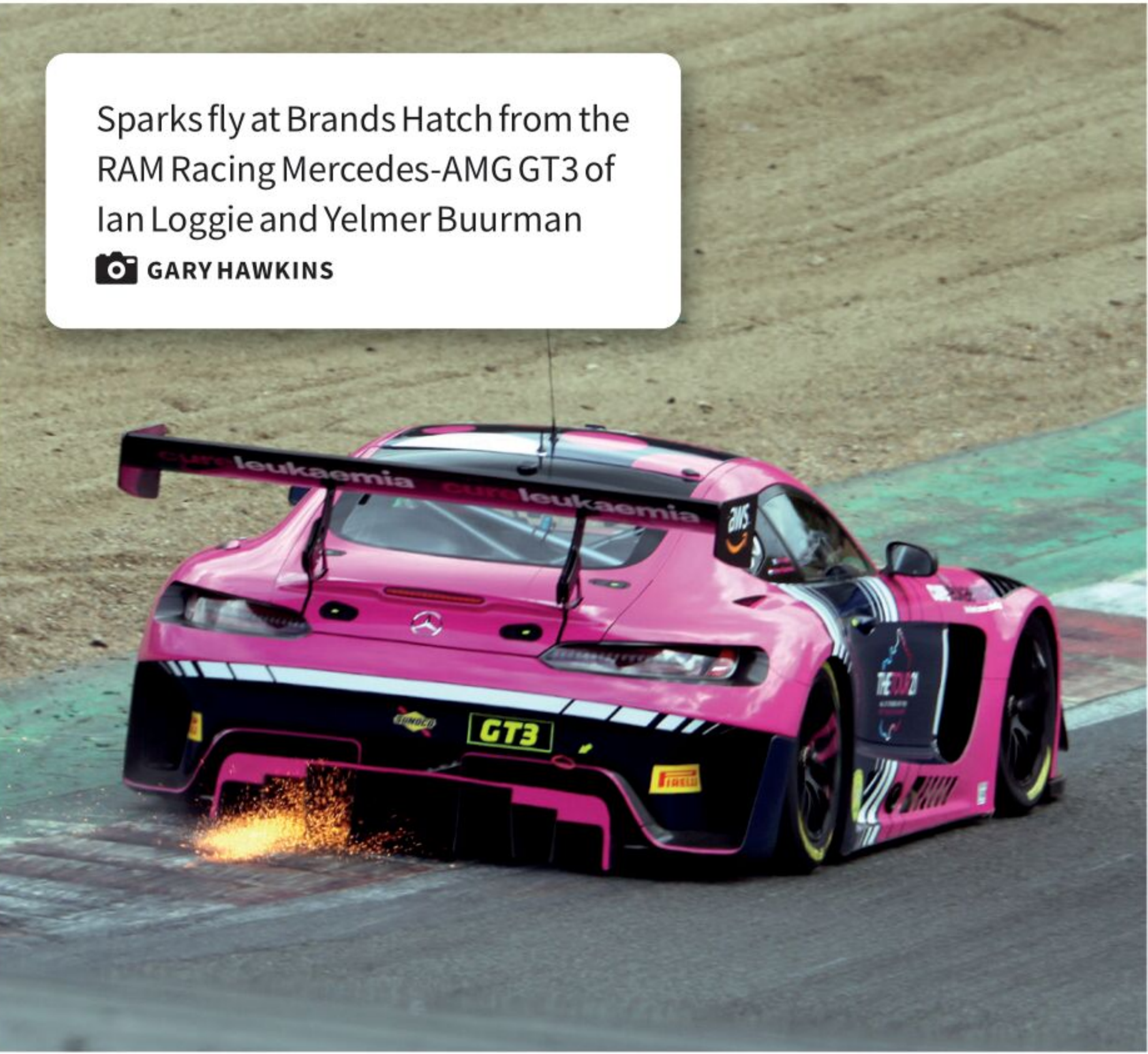
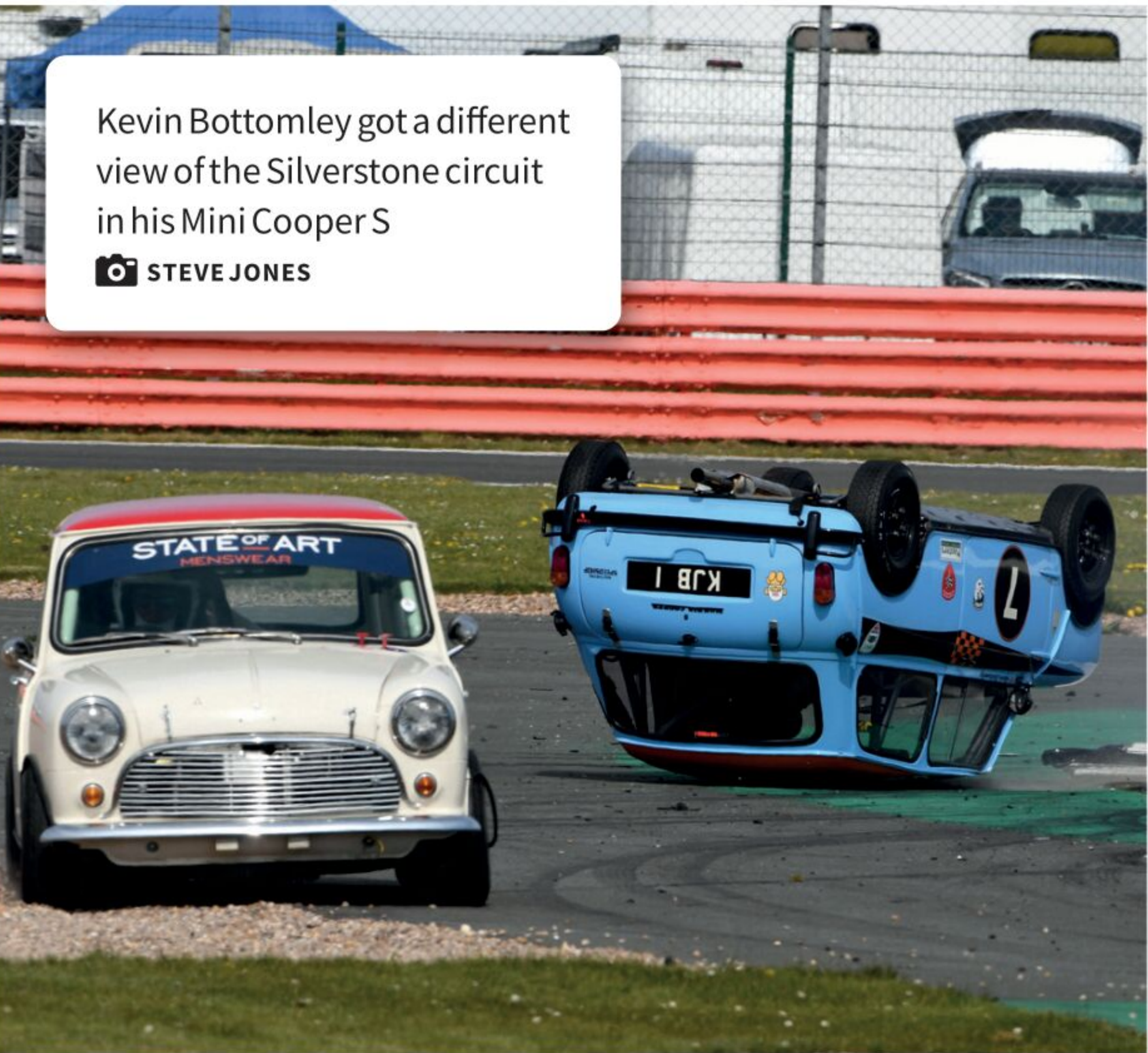
COMPILED BY STEFAN MACKLEY





An eclectic GT Cup field at Silverstone is led by the Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Richard and Sam Neary (left) and the Radical RXC GT3 of Steve Burgess and Ben Dimmack

 OLLIE READ



Jamie Sharp (Medina Sport JL17) leads a gaggle of cars in the closing stages of the 50th Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch, which he would win

📷 STEPHEN FISHER





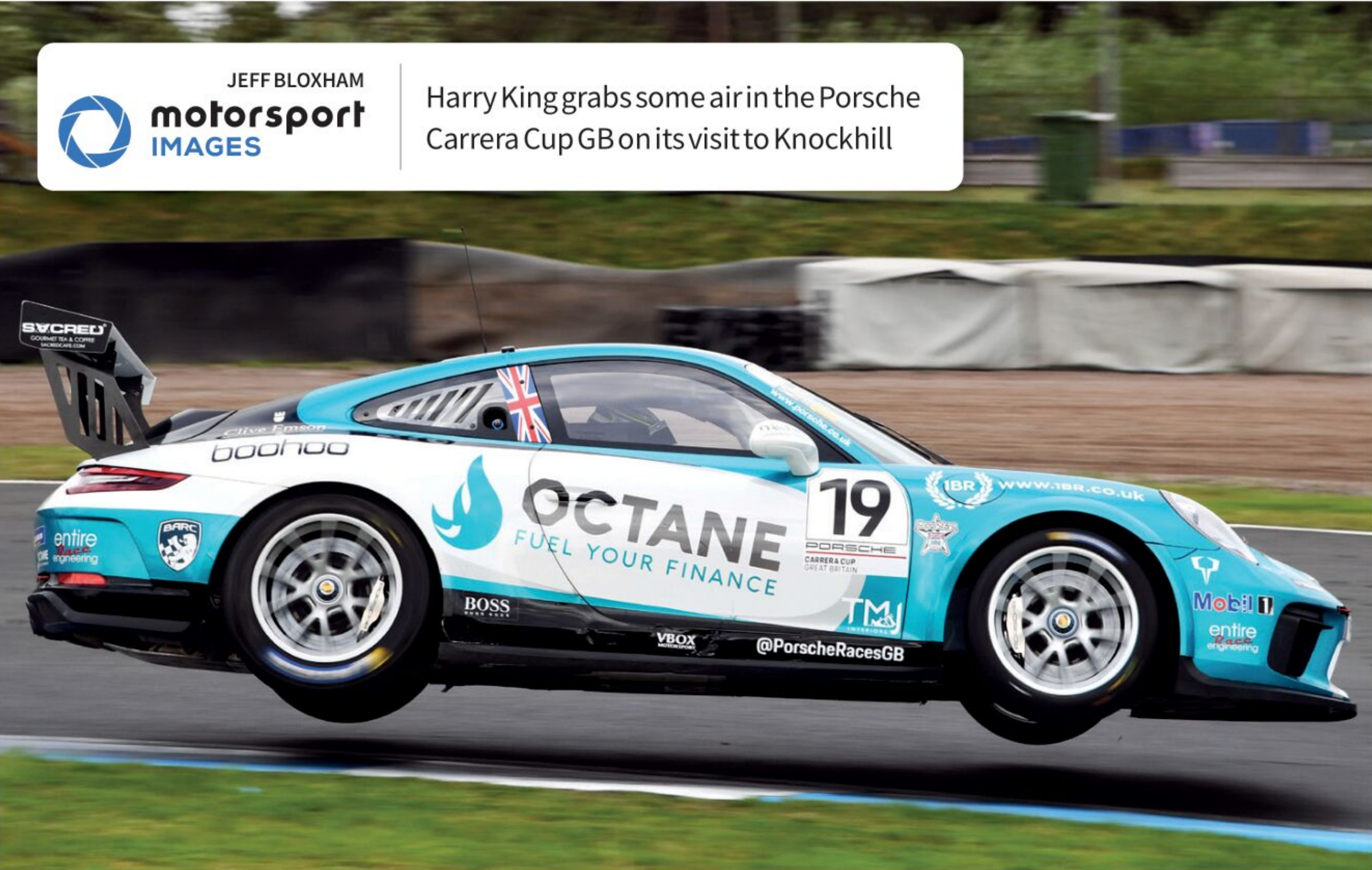


Reflecting on their race, drivers from the Porsche Sprint Challenge leave their cars in parc ferme at Oulton Park
📷 JAKOB EBREY



Start of the Festival of Britain Trophy race at the Goodwood Revival, with eventual winner Mark Gillies on the inside in his green ERAR3A
📷 RICHARD STYLES

CLUB AUTOSPORT PICS OF THE YEAR





A rare mistake from Steven Dailly at Croft. He secured his fifth BMW Compact Cup title on the bounce in 2021, and number one spot in our national driver rankings (p100)

OLLIEREAD



Bird's-eye view for spectators of Christopher Batty's Locomobile 38 in action at Mallory Park

MICKWALKER





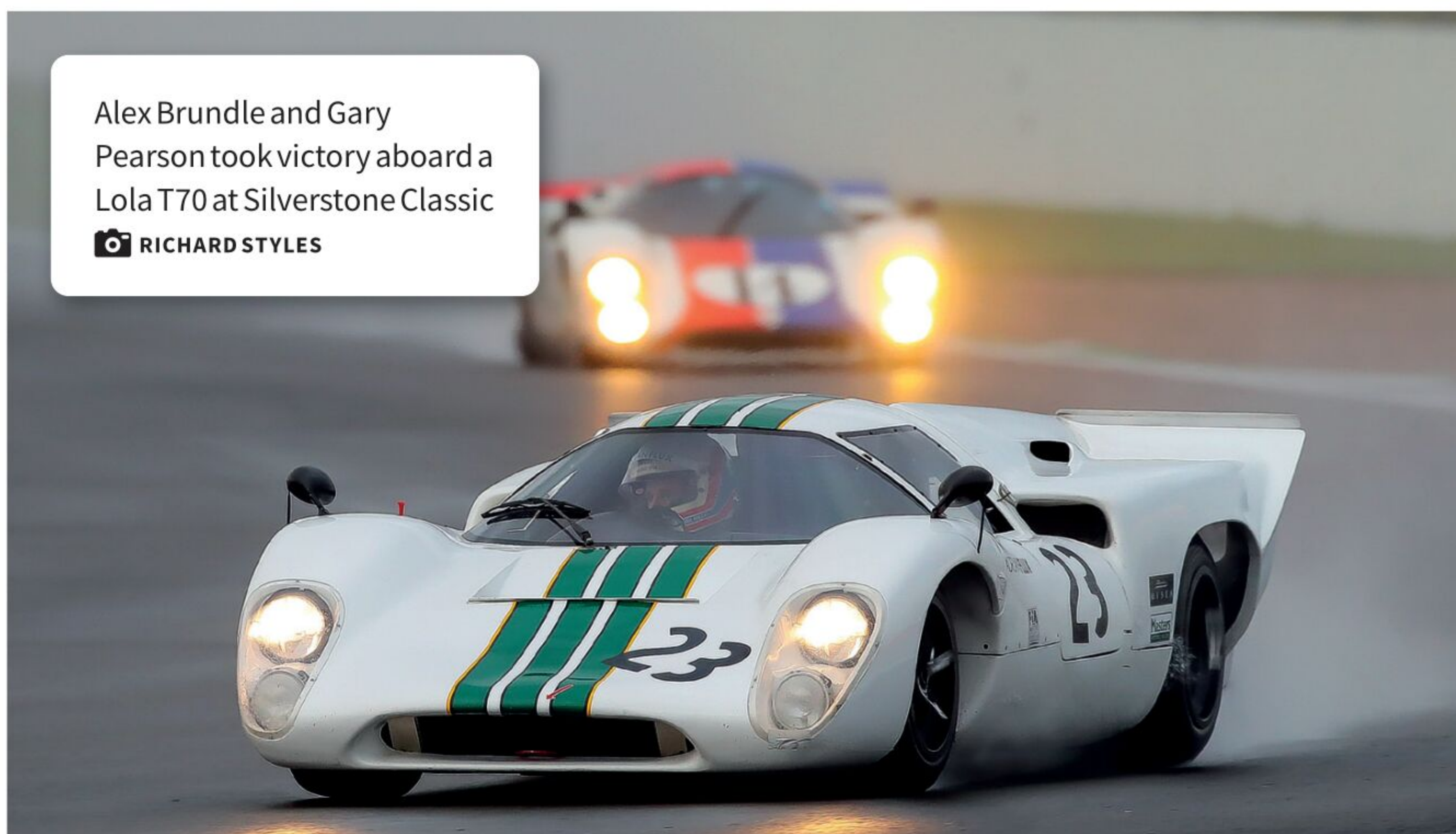
Michael Moyers (left) and Jordan Dempsey get a little too close for comfort during the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch

📷 RACHEL BOURNE



Alex Brundle and Gary Pearson took victory aboard a Lola T70 at Silverstone Classic

📷 RICHARD STYLES



Ian Howard emerged unhurt from this roll in his Citroen C1 during a CityCar Cup race at Croft

📷 STEVE JONES

THE 2021 CLUB RACING CHAMPIONS

From single-seater stars to sportscar supremos, and from Castle Combe winners to Scottish victors, here's a list of this season's champions

COMPILED BY STEPHEN LICKORISH AND STEFAN MACKLEY

750 MOTOR CLUB

750 FORMULA CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Bove (Darvi 88P)

ALFA ROMEO CHAMPIONSHIP

Barry McMahon (156)

ARMED FORCES RACE CHALLENGE

Jonathan Candler (Peugeot 306)

BIKESPORTS CHAMPIONSHIP

Leon Morrell (Radical SR3)

BMW CAR CLUB RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

Ben Pearson (E46 330Ci)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH CHAMPIONSHIP

Ryan Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2)

CLIO 182 CHAMPIONSHIP

Jack Dwane

CLUB ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Robert Baker/Carl Swift (SEAT Leon Eurocup)

F1000 CHAMPIONSHIP

Lee Morgan

FORMULA VEE CHAMPIONSHIP

James Harridge (Maverick)

HOT HATCH CHAMPIONSHIP

David Drinkwater (BMW Compact)

LOCOST CHAMPIONSHIP

Martin West

MA7DA CHAMPIONSHIP

Danny Andrew

MX-5 CUP

Ben Short

SPORT SPECIALS CHAMPIONSHIP

Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)



SPORTS 1000 CHAMPIONSHIP

Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT3S)

TOYOTA MR2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Aaron Cooke (Roadster)

TYPE R TROPHY

Adam Shepherd

BRITISH AUTOMOBILE RACING CLUB

2CVs

Pete Sparrow

BRITCAR ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Will Powell/Dave Scaramanga

(McLaren 650S GT3)

BRITCAR ENDURANCE PRAGA CATEGORY

Richard Wells/Alex Kapadia

BRITCAR TROPHY

Simon Baker/Kevin Clarke/Ollie Reuben

(BMW 1 Series)

BRITISH TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

DIVISION 1

Ryan Smith (Mercedes Actros)

BRITISH TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

DIVISION 2

Craig Reid (Iveco Stralis)

CATERHAM GRADUATES

Sigma 135 James McCall

Sigma 150 Jamie Ellwood

SigMax Harry Senior

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP

Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20)

GINETTA G40 CUP

Marc Warren

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Toby Trice

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Adam Smalley

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Josh Steed

GINETTA JUNIOR

Aston Millar

JUNIOR SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Charlie Hand

KUMHO BMW CHAMPIONSHIP

Kevin Denwood (Compact)

LEGENDS CARS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Miles Rudman

MAX5 CHAMPIONSHIP



Paul Roddison (MX-5 Mk4)

MGOC CHAMPIONSHIP

Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

MIGHTY MINIS CHAMPIONSHIP

Dan Heywood

SUPER MIGHTY MINIS

Ian Slark

MINI CHALLENGE - JCW

Dan Zelos

PICKUP TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

George Turiccki

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Dan Cammish

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Theo Edgerton

BRITISH RACING & SPORTS CAR CLUB

BMW COMPACT CUP

Steven Dailly

BRITISH F4 CHAMPIONSHIP

Matthew Rees

BRITISH GT GT3

Leo Machitski/Dennis Lind

(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)

BRITISH GT GT4

Will Burns/Gus Burton (BMW M4 GT4)

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Green Geoff Newman

White Charlie Lower

CATERHAM ROADSPORT CHAMPIONSHIP

Taylor O'Flanagan

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R CHAMPIONSHIP



STYLES

Blair McConachie

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R CHAMPIONSHIP

Lewis Thompson

CATERHAM SEVEN UK CHAMPIONSHIP

Stephen Nuttall

CITYCAR CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Nic Grindrod (Citroen C1)

FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP

Rob Smith

FIESTA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Jenson Brickley

FUN CUP

UVio/Hofmann's Lotus

(Scott Fitzgerald/Fabio Randaccio)

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP

Oliver Allwood

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Harry Storer

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

Samuel Smith

NATIONAL FF1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)

NORTHERN FF1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

Jack Wolfenden (Firman RFR17)

ST-XR CHALLENGE

Chris Jones (ST)

SUPER CLASSIC FF1600

Nick Barnes (Swift FB89, highest-scoring class)

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Oliver White (Medina Sport JL17K)

CASTLE COMBE GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Tony Bennett (Caterham R300)

CASTLE COMBE SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

James Keepin (MG ZR 160)

CLASSIC TOURING CAR RACING CLUB**BLUE OVAL SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP**

Martin Reynolds (Ford Anglia)

CLASSIC AND HISTORIC THUNDER**SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP**

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CLASSIC FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Andrew Smith (March 783)

CLASSIC FF1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

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FRONT-ENGINE FORMULA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

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HISTORIC FORMULA 2

Nick Pancisi (March 712)

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IRISH FORMULA SHEANE

Philip Sheane

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Anthony Cross (Sheane)

IRISH GINETTA JUNIOR**CHAMPIONSHIP**

Se Og Martin



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Aidan Byrne (Toyota Celica)

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Shane Murphy

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COCKSHOOT CUP

Brian Butler (MGF)

MG CUP

Mike Williams (Rover Metro VVC)

MG METRO CUP

Tim Shooter

MG TROPHY

Sam Kirkpatrick (ZR 190)

MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE

Pippa Cow (Austin-Healey Frogeye Sprite)

MINI 7 RACING CLUB**MINI MIGLIA CHALLENGE**

Andrew Jordan

MINI SE7EN CHALLENGE

Jeff Smith

MONOPOSTO RACING CLUB**F3 CUP**

Stefano Leaney (Dallara F317)

MONOPOSTO CHAMPIONSHIP

Lee Fern (Dallara F301)

MONOPOSTO TIEDEMAN TROPHY

Ben Powney (Jedi Mk6/7)

MOTORSPORT VISION RACING**7 RACE SERIES****Caterham 420R** Anthony Barnes**Caterham 1600** Jay McCormack**CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPE CHAMPIONSHIP**

Barry Webb (Mallock Mk16)



There was no stopping
Neaves in BCV8s this year

WALKER

ELISE TROPHY

Jason McNulty (Elise S3)

FERRARI CHALLENGE UK

James Swift

FOCUS CUP

Simon Rudd

GB3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Zak O'Sullivan

GT CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Sam and Richard Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT3)

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Dominic Wheatley

MSVT SUPERCUP

Darren Goes (SEAT Leon)

MSVT TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP

Scott Parkin (VW Golf TDI)

PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Matt Kyle-Henney (Boxster S)

PRODUCTION GOLF & BMW CHAMPIONSHIP

Robert Gamble (BMW E30 320i)

PRODUCTION GTI CHAMPIONSHIP

Simon Hill (Golf Mk5)

RADICAL CHALLENGE CHAMPIONSHIP

Matt Bell (SR3)

RADICAL SR1 CUP

James Lay

SPORTS 2000 DURATEC CHAMPIONSHIP

Tom Stoten (Gunn TS11)

SPORTS 2000 HISTORIC CHAMPIONSHIP

Trevor Welsh (Lola T492)

SPORTS 2000 PINTO CHAMPIONSHIP

Ross and Nick Hyett (Lola T88/90)

Z CARS & NEW GENERATION PRODUCTION**BMW CHAMPIONSHIP**

Edd Giddings (Z4)

NORTHERN IRELAND**NORTHERN IRELAND FORD FIESTA ZETEC CHAMPIONSHIP**

Mark Stewart

NORTHERN IRELAND FF1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

Jordan Dempsey (Van Diemen RF00)

NORTHERN IRELAND GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Gerard O'Connell (SHP Escort)

NORTHERN IRELAND MAZDA MODI-5-CUP

Gregory McMillan

NORTHERN IRELAND ROADSPORTS CHAMPIONSHIP

Jim Larkham (Radical PR6)

NORTHERN IRELAND SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP

Donal O'Neill (SEAT Cupra)

SCOTTISH MOTOR RACING CLUB**SCOTTISH C1 CUP**

Ross Dunn

SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS AND SALOONS CHAMPIONSHIP

John Kinmond (Rover 3500)

SCOTTISH FF1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

Jordan Gronkowski (Van Diemen JL012K)

SCOTTISH FIESTA ST CHAMPIONSHIP

Steven Gray

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP

Michael Weddell

OTHERS**CIVIC CUP**

Alistair Camp

MORGAN CHALLENGE

Brett Syndercombe (4/4)

NORTHERN SALOON & SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Simon Sheridan (Honda Civic)

SCOTTISH LEGENDS CARS CHAMPIONSHIP

Stewart Black

TOURING CAR TROPHY/TCR UK CHAMPIONSHIP

Lewis Kent (Hyundai i30 N TCR)

WELSH SPORTS AND SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Gareth John (Ginetta G40)



Swift was quick in
Ferrari Challenge

HINDLE

OUR MOTORSPORT MOMENTS MADE INTO MOVIES

Title rivals tied on points heading into the final race of the season. On-track collisions as well as an off-track feud between the respective team bosses throughout the campaign. Controversial stewarding decisions and the destination of the championship decided by a last-lap pass for the lead. Such were its twists and turns that the the plot of the 2021 Formula 1 season would be scarcely more believable than 2001 Indycar silver-screen disaster *Driven*. But it got us thinking at Autosport about other moments from the history of motorsport that we'd like to see on the big screen. From larger-than-life characters, fierce rivalries, and stand-out moments for the right and wrong reasons, here are our picks.



BERNIE ECCLESTONE

The original Formula 1 supremo has been the star of numerous books and documentaries, willingly or otherwise, but a film on the life of Bernie would certainly illustrate some untold tales. With a bit of artistic licence akin to *Rush* it could provide the next F1-inspired cinematic icon.

HAYDN COBB

HAWTHORN vs MOSS

The dramatic, controversial and tragic story of the fight for the 1958 Formula 1 world championship. Britons Mike Hawthorn and Stirling Moss, very different personalities, battled to replace Juan Manuel Fangio at the top of the sport. Hawthorn won, but both lost team-mates during a brutal season before Hawthorn was killed in a road accident and Moss became the sport's benchmark.

KEVIN TURNER



DAYS OF THUNDER

This stretches the premise, but I'd want to watch a feature-length documentary on the making of *Days of Thunder*. No script, a blown budget, massively missed deadlines and fiery on-set arguments. It all culminated in studio Paramount Pictures hastily exiting its \$500million deal to work with producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer.

MATT KEW

LIFE RACING ENGINES

Everyone loves an underdog. And, in motorsport terms, there's often a fascination with those plucky teams at the back. Arguably one of the absolute worst was Life Racing Engines' F1 effort in 1990. There was a plethora of issues, including allegedly failing to have a tyre pressure gauge at Phoenix, which make this an enthralling story.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
motorsport
IMAGES



DICK JOHNSON

Dick Johnson's devastation-to-success story is prime for the Netflix treatment. In 1980 his hopes of winning at Bathurst were thwarted when a fan at the top of Mount Panorama kicked a rock onto the track, resulting in a crash from the lead. Dick in floods of tears captured the nation's hearts, pledging the money to get him back on his feet, and he won the following year.

TOM HOWARD



PLATO vs MULLER

"I have to win it – my whole life has been building to this," offers the earnest, eager Englishman. "Being champion... zis won't change my life," shrugs the dismissive Frenchman. Two strong characters, dramatic collisions, twists and turns, and an ending that was scarcely believable. The intra-Vauxhall 2001 British Touring Car Championship battle between Jason Plato and Yvan Muller had it all.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Who'd play
Hawthorn and
Moss, pictured here at
Porto's Circuito da
Boavista?



PENSKE DNQ INDIANAPOLIS 500

Fresh from blowing the doors off its rivals at the year's biggest race with an engine developed in secret, North American open-wheel racing's biggest team then capitulates the following year and fails to qualify. Penske's 1995 Indianapolis 500 DNQ is a story stranger than fiction – and surely deserves cinematic treatment!

JAMES NEWBOLD



LELLA LOMBARDI

From humble beginnings as a butcher's daughter in a small northern Italian town to becoming the only female driver in history to score points (well, half a point) in F1, Lella Lombardi's captivating journey would be perfect for the big screen. Her F1 career was followed by success in sportscars, including four appearances at the Le Mans 24 Hours, before her death from cancer aged just 50.

MEGAN WHITE



ANDREA MODA

There are two particular TV trends in 2021: documentary series and true crime dramas. What better way to tie the two together than a film about Andrea Moda's volatile half-season in F1? The Italian squad managed to upset everybody, qualify for the Monaco Grand Prix, and have its owner arrested for fraud. It almost writes itself.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL 1985

Starting at the back of the field with a 10-second penalty courtesy of a crash in practice, Johnny Herbert's hopes of winning the 1985 Formula Ford Festival in the unfancied Quest were remote at best. But his charge through the heat, quarter and semi-final and eventual outright victory against the odds make this a blockbuster.

STEFAN MACKLEY



[autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)



Autosport's Top 50 drivers of the year, which ranks the past season's high achievers, was published in last week's magazine and on Autosport.com. Chief Editor Kevin Turner hosts this episode and is joined by Haydn Cobb (Autosport.com Editor), Jake Boxall-Legge (Technical Editor) and sportscar guru Gary Watkins to discuss 2021's final selection, and the drivers who missed out.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Dakar Rally

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
2-14 January

UK MOTORSPORT

Mallory Park 750MC

26 December

Plum Pudding,
Sports/Sports Racing



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The almost complete complement of drivers competing in the 1994 FIA Touring Car World Cup at Donington Park gather for the group photo.

Back row, l-r: Jan Lammers, Markus Oestreich, Will Hoy, Johnny Cecotto, Hans-Joachim Stuck, Steve Soper, Tim Harvey, Kieth Odor, Yvan Muller,

Frank Biela, Thierry Tassin, Michael Bartels, Matt Neal, Alain Menu, Carlos Palau (with David Leslie's characteristic crop visible behind), Robb Gravett, Vaclav Bervid, Stefano Modena, Milos Bychl, Per-Gunnar Andersson, Paul Radisich, Anthony Reid, Bernard Thuner and Philippe Gache (or at least his right arm);

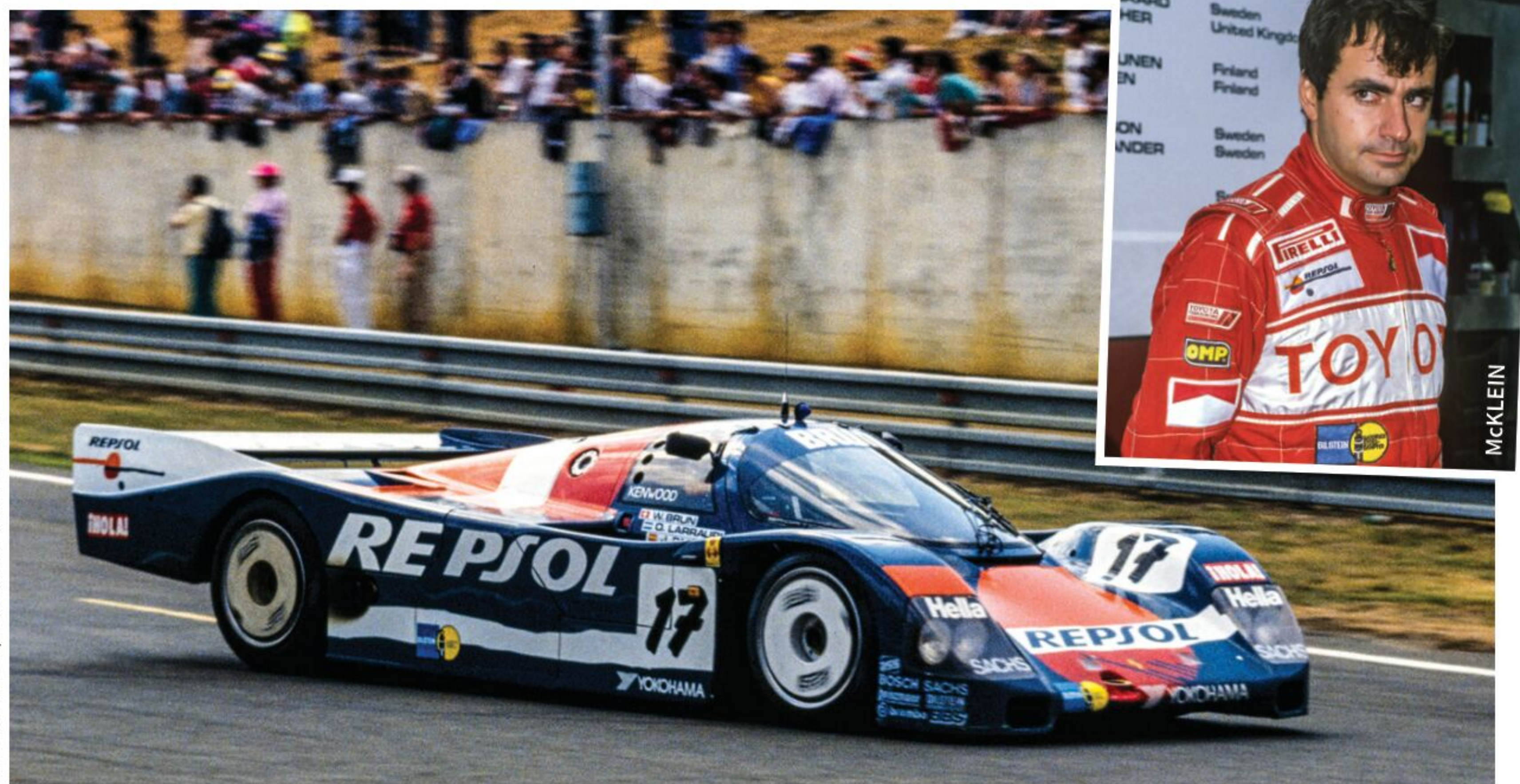
front row, l-r: Marc Duez, Gabriele Tarquini, Adrian Campos, Emanuele Pirro, Julian Bailey, John Cleland, Luis Villamil, Luis Perez-Sala, Antonio Albacete, Roberto Ravaglia, Patrick Watts, Antonio Tamburini and Slim Borgudd. Shaun van der Linde and Joachim Winkelhock also took part in the single-race event (which was

won by Radisich), but are not pictured – although there does appear to be a blond-haired head behind Tassin. In a couple of instances we had to employ a little educated guesswork to make an identification, so if you reckon you've spotted an error, please drop us a line to autosport@autosport.com



For classic tin-top DVDs head to
dukevideo.com/Touring-Car

GARY HAWKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY



WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

When a career-changing move goes begging

CARLOS SAINZ SR

It's ironic that double World Rally champion and triple Dakar Rally winner Carlos Sainz Sr's topflight career was launched by his asphalt specialism. His two titles (1987-88) in the Tarmac-heavy Spanish rally series earned a factory Toyota drive on the world stage the following year.

His skill for the smooth was helped by prior racing exploits in Renault 5s and Formula Ford 1600. That, combined with his mechanical sympathy, made him a good fit for endurance racing. Little wonder he deeply impressed with his brief foray into sportscars in 1989.

Sainz had just turned 27 when he had a run at Dijon in Brun Motorsport's Porsche 962C. As Autosport reported, he was "a mite faster" than co-driver and compatriot Jesus Pareja, who would win the GT2 class of the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1994.

Sainz recalls how his cameo came about: "Jesus is a very good friend of mine. He said, 'Would you be interested in testing the Le Mans car? We are going to Dijon in one month.' I said, 'I've never driven a car like that.' He said, 'Don't worry, I have worked with Brun, and we will organise it.' It was amazing."

Contemporary reports had Sainz slated for the seat at Le Mans alongside Pareja

and two-time grand prix finisher Oscar Larrauri ahead of a possible run-out at Jarama. But Sainz reckons that was "never the plan".

Nevertheless, the initial sessions in France had given him a good measure of the speed and huge turbochargers he'd just missed in the WRC after the demise of the Group B era. It was a driving experience Sainz still remembers fondly.

"I was shocked more than anything by the power and the downforce in the fast corners – it was great," he says of the 962. "I remember quite a big turbo lag at that time. One moment after the first run, Jesus said, 'No, no, you go faster, trust me, you will get the downforce.' You need to trust!"

Sainz would later return to the cockpit of an endurance thoroughbred in 1998. After returning to Toyota for a second WRC stint, he tested the GT-One at Barcelona and lapped within a second of Martin Brundle.

That time around, a Le Mans debut was very much planned, only for it to clash with the Acropolis Rally. Ultimately, Sainz would leave the high-profile Circuit de la Sarthe rally cameos to Walter Rohrl, Sebastien Loeb and Colin McRae.

MATT KEW



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F1 2021 REVIEW

ALL THE RACES

ALL THE DRAMA



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Swiss-made (except the price)

When you think about it, the exquisite C63 Sealander Automatic is an outlier. Hand-made in Biel, Switzerland's watchmaking capital, it's powered by a tried-and-tested automatic movement. The polished dial boasts finessed and chamfered indexes, plus generous amounts of lume for low-light timekeeping. It's also waterproof to 150m. You'd expect a watch this advanced to sell for thousands of pounds. And yet the C63 Sealander Automatic retails for less than £600. The world's gone mad, hasn't it?

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Unsurprisingly Swiss.



SUTTON
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IMAGES

A thrilling contest amid big questions

What a season that was. The best for nearly a decade? Certainly. The best ever? Probably not, but it depends on your perspective.

Max Verstappen's triumph over Lewis Hamilton was thrilling and engaging, controversial and hotly debated – a brilliant year-long mix to captivate onlookers. The new champion is a worthy hero, surely destined to go on and claim much more success, while his defeated rival still stands on the precipice of possessing the ultimate record alone.

Verstappen and Hamilton end 2021 as the championship's undisputed stars, but next year *could* be very different. If either Red Bull or Mercedes has piled too many resources into the campaign just gone, then the start of the new regulation cycle finally coming for 2022 may be tricky. Plus, there's the chance that Ferrari, McLaren or another team has stolen an innovative march for the fresh rules.

Yet as 2021 ended, paddock insiders were hinting that the two leading squads would still have an edge with their recent experience of what it takes to succeed. So, perhaps, the new era will be the all-out contest F1's owner wants.

But there's danger in too much excess. Formula E's winning randomness shows a category can suffer when the narrative becomes crowded, and the 'Netflix-effect' ending of F1 2021 – in officiating and racing standards – is as off-putting to some as it is gripping to others.

F1's very soul now seems to be at stake: genuine unpredictable sport or scripted enjoyment? Surely the former is entertainment enough. ■



Alex Kalinauckas
**ALEX
KALINAUCKAS**
GRAND PRIX
EDITOR



COVER IMAGE

Ferrari; McLaren;
Mercedes;
Red Bull

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EDITORIAL

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OVERVIEW

How Formula 1 2021 was won – and lost

Two rivals from warring camps delivered a season we'll never forget

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY



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It was a title fight for the ages. Two of the best teams in Formula 1's history finally went toe to toe for an entire campaign, led by two exceptional drivers who straddle the generations – the older master and younger challenger.

There were arguments, clashes and tactical games between Red Bull and Mercedes, Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton, throughout 2021. And in the end the Dutchman took his first F1 title. It was not without controversy and at times the atmosphere turned unbearably toxic, but F1 got the box office showdown it wanted – even, infamously, on the season's final lap.

This is a story of how Hamilton came within touching distance of reaching the greatest achievement yet in his glittering career, but in the end he was beaten by Verstappen, the pretender prevailing to seal the championship and kickstart his own F1 legend.

Testing reveals an inverted formbook

Coming into the campaign, it was unknown how much the cars' altered rears – with cuts to floor sizes, and smaller strakes on diffusers and brake ducts mandated – would alter the competitive picture. That was because this rule change, forced through to reduce speeds and the strain on Pirelli's tyres as the cars reached new downforce and speed peaks, combined with the requirement for almost all the rest of each team's design to be the same as it had been at the end of 2020.

The carryover cars looked nearly identical to the ones that had been used in the previous campaign, but the rear alterations did have a major impact on the championship battle and the eventual



Bottas won two of the three new sprint races

MAUGER

winners. This was because the changes hurt the teams using low-rake concepts – Mercedes and Aston Martin – much more than those using the high-rake approach pioneered by Red Bull. And so, in testing, Mercedes' challenge for the year ahead was revealed. It finished with the fifth quickest time, but always felt it was much closer to Red Bull, which had topped the single pre-season three-day test in Bahrain.

The floor cuts hurt the W12 more than the reduced diffuser and brake-duct strakes, with the downforce loss so great in this area that the team was seriously struggling with rear-end instability. It had two weeks to fettle its machine, with large aerodynamic upgrades few and far between in 2021. "We don't have the answers after the end of the test," said Mercedes strategy director James Vowles. ►

FORMULA 1 2021 RACE BY RACE



HONE

BAHRAIN GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Bottas

Red Bull's title challenge is confirmed with Verstappen's 0.388s pole gap to Hamilton. The Dutchman leads from the off and through a safety car restart, before Mercedes' aggressive two-stop strategy gets Hamilton ahead. This sets up a tyre-life-offset contest, where Verstappen charges to make late attempt at retaking the lead, but runs too wide and has to give it back to Hamilton.



HONE

EMILIA ROMAGNA GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Norris

Verstappen and Hamilton clash at the start, where the Red Bull seizes the lead from third on the grid, then edges away through the drying, interrupted first stint. Hamilton gets lapped after switch to slicks when he goes off lapping Russell, who then crashes into Bottas, causing a red flag. Verstappen nearly drops it at the restart but wins, while Hamilton rescues second after restarting ninth.



COATES

PORTUGUESE GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Bottas

Bottas takes pole and Hamilton drops behind Verstappen at the safety car restart that follows Raikkonen clattering Giovinazzi. But two small slips at Turn 14 let Hamilton close in and repass his rival, before reeling his team-mate in and then dominating. Verstappen dispatches Bottas on the Finn's out-lap, but loses the fastest lap bonus point to a track-limits infringement on the final tour.



Verstappen became the first Dutch F1 champion after an epic season-long duel with Hamilton



SPANISH GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Bottas

Hamilton wins in a repeat of his 2019 Hungarian GP triumph after losing the lead from his 100th F1 pole to an ultra-aggressive Verstappen Turn 1 dive. He chases the Red Bull from there through the first stops but, with Perez out of the picture, Mercedes has the opportunity to give Hamilton a second stop and, despite being briefly delayed by Bottas, he charges back to beat Verstappen.



MONACO GP

1 Verstappen **2** Sainz **3** Norris

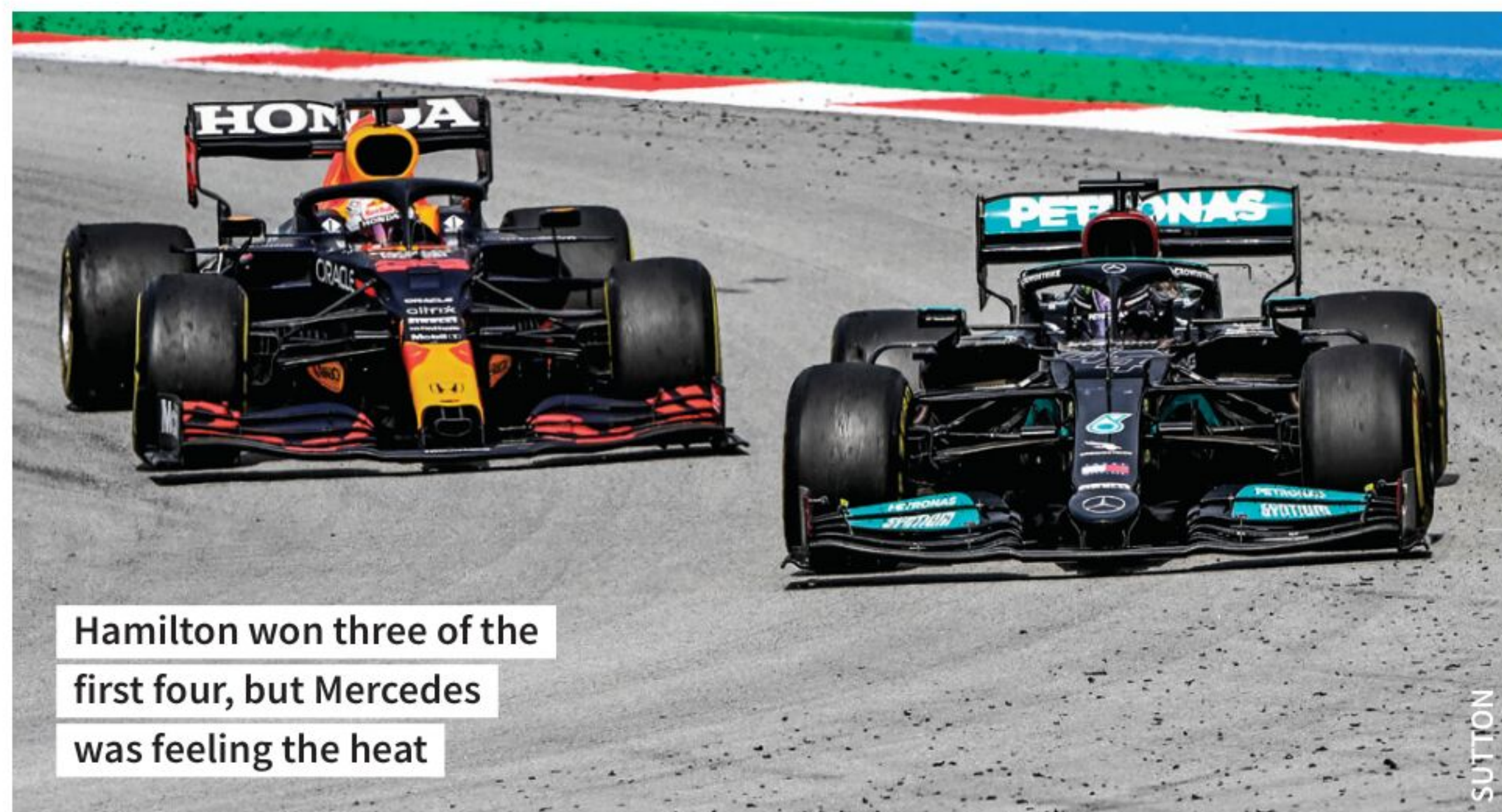
Leclerc fails to start from the pole he's secured with a late-Q3 crash after Ferrari fails to spot damage to his left driveshaft hub. Inheriting 'pole', Verstappen wards off Bottas to the stops, where Bottas's right-front is machined on by a misaligned wheelgun. Sainz chases Verstappen but never really threatens, while Norris holds off a Perez charge with Hamilton stuck in the pack.



AZERBAIJAN GP

1 Perez **2** Vettel **3** Gasly

Verstappen and Perez overcut Hamilton to go 1-2 after the title contenders pass polesitter Leclerc. Verstappen dominates either side of a safety car caused by Stroll's left-rear blowing, which then happens to the leader. Perez wins after a red-flag standing restart, where Hamilton falls to last after challenging for lead when he accidentally knocks his 'magic' brake bias alteration system back on.



Hamilton won three of the first four, but Mercedes was feeling the heat

Mercedes still edges the early races

Given the testing drama and Verstappen taking Bahrain pole position by 0.388 seconds – this confirmed the RB16B as the package to beat, a feeling that remained throughout the year – the season opener was a surprise result, with Hamilton winning. Although the Mercedes driver had delivered his typical tyre-management mastery in that event, it still required Verstappen to err. “That won’t happen again,” said Hamilton of his rival’s track-limits infringement, but that wasn’t quite the case for Verstappen, bidding to take his first title in any car racing category.

He won at Imola, dominant other than during a rolling restart off that went unpunished by the following but radio-less Charles Leclerc. That was where Hamilton made the first of two massive and uncharacteristic errors in 2021, when he slid off lapping George Russell and got trapped in the Tosa gravel. He went a lap down, saved only by the red flag that followed Russell’s enormous shunt with Valtteri Bottas. Hamilton was able to charge back to second.

But further small Verstappen errors came in Portugal, with a pair of slips at the exit of the penultimate corner. The first gave Hamilton the chance to repass after Verstappen had neatly snookered him behind Bottas at the safety car restart, and the other cost the Red Bull racer the fastest lap bonus point when he ran too wide there on the last lap – he trailed in second after Hamilton had edged ahead of his team-mate Sergio Perez.

In Spain, Mercedes was able to beat Red Bull in familiar circumstances by putting Hamilton on a surprise two-stopper and letting him use all the bonus tyre life on a charge, while Verstappen was powerless to resist in the lead. He’d got there with a super-aggressive Turn 1 dive ahead of the polesitting Hamilton (he’d also edged out the Briton’s first-lap attack at Imola, to leave the



Mercedes bouncing over the Tamburello kerbs. The early races confirmed not only Red Bull’s pace, but that Verstappen was willing to push up to the limit of acceptable racing to succeed.

But what did Red Bull have to do to win a ‘Hungary 2019’ battle against Mercedes after being defeated in that way again in Spain? “Just need a faster car,” Verstappen replied.

Red Bull’s purple patch

Red Bull did what its star wanted. Across the year it added a stream of small tweaks to the RB16B, such as bargeboard developments and a new diffuser in Portugal, while the car also had a Mercedes W11-like rear suspension layout added in Red Bull’s off-season token spend. These updates had a great effect in the races that closed out the late spring and started the summer. And Red Bull had help from its current and former rivals.

In Monaco, although Leclerc’s Q3 crash cost Verstappen the chance to take pole, his Ferrari’s absence from the start gave Red Bull a gift on a track where overtaking remains essentially impossible in F1. Not that this mattered – after he’d seen off Bottas at Ste Devote, he was untroubled up front and Mercedes

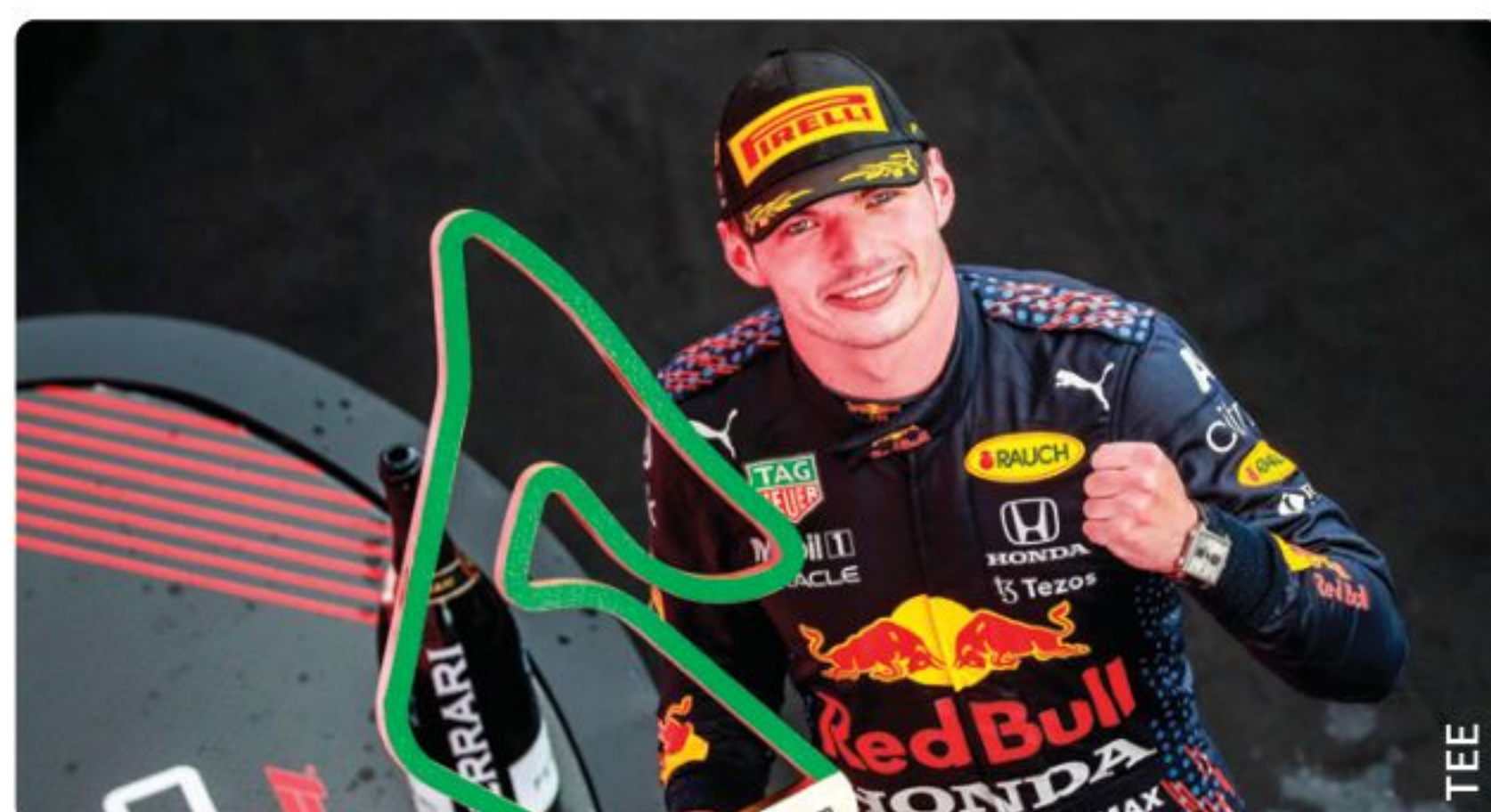
FORMULA 1 2021 RACE BY RACE



FRENCH GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Perez

Polesitter Verstappen gifts Hamilton the lead when he goes off at Turn 2. Mercedes’ underestimation of the undercut’s power and Verstappen’s pace combine to get him back ahead. But with Hamilton and Bottas swarming, Red Bull goes aggressive with a second stop. This time Verstappen wins a ‘Hungary 2019’ scenario, catching and passing both Mercedes as Perez beats Bottas to third.



STYRIAN GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Bottas

Verstappen dominates from pole, leading every lap ahead of Hamilton, while Mercedes loses out on ultimate pace and on tyre degradation. In the pack behind, Leclerc gives Gasly a first-lap puncture, while Norris’s early high position drops Perez out of the lead fight and a slow first pitstop gets Bottas ahead. The fresh rubber from a second stop isn’t enough for Perez to rescue third.



AUSTRIAN GP

1 Verstappen **2** Bottas **3** Norris

Verstappen leads every lap again, makes an extra stop, secures the fastest lap and still wins by 18s. Bottas takes second after Hamilton picks up damage on kerbs, with Norris a close third following a battle with Perez and getting a contentious penalty for crowding the Red Bull off. He holds Hamilton up, earning praise from the world champion, but his penalty gets Bottas ahead.



Tyre blow-out cost Verstappen in Baku, but Perez picked up pieces

“Norris cost Hamilton when he passed to claim the third of four podiums of his season”

lost its best hope in the Finn's disastrous pitstop, with Hamilton trapped in the pack and eventually finishing seventh as he struggled with generating the required tyre temperatures on the softer rubber used on the low-wear street tracks.

In Azerbaijan, Leclerc again took pole in a Q3 that ended under red flags, but he was quickly deposed by Hamilton and the Red Bulls. Once Verstappen and Perez had overcut Hamilton they looked untouchable out front, until Verstappen's left-rear blew in the same fashion as Lance Stroll's had earlier. But Hamilton handed his title rival a gift when he accidentally knocked on his 'magic' brake bias alteration system when surging past Perez at the restart, went off dramatically at Turn 1 and fell to last. Perez rescued Red Bull's win.



Wolff and Horner: no love lost as they bickered through the season

Verstappen's next small gaffe came in France, where he'd stunned Mercedes at a track where it hadn't lost pole or a race since it rejoined the F1 calendar in 2018, by slipping off the road beyond Turn 1, caught out in the wind. But on a day on which all teams struggled with tyre graining, Red Bull acted decisively. It put Verstappen on an aggressive two-stopper after Mercedes had underestimated the undercut's power at the first services, and he emerged ahead of Hamilton. Armed with fresh rubber and displaying better rear tyre wear with the softer set-up Red Bull generally ran, he finally sealed a 'Hungary 2019' battle with a penultimate-lap pass.

In Austria, Lando Norris was the main threat, although he never got near Verstappen in the Styrian GP and only really did so at the start of the Austrian GP. But he played havoc with Mercedes' plans in the latter race for the second contest at the Red Bull Ring. While Verstappen disappeared, Norris battled Perez and picked up a contentious penalty, then held up Hamilton and Bottas. He remained a rapid lurking menace after his long stop, which meant Bottas had to be waved past Hamilton after the Briton had picked up left-rear brake damage on the track's fearsome kerbs, and Norris cost Hamilton further points when he passed by to claim the third of four podiums of his excellent season.

The season's squabbles

While Mercedes was clearly less than impressed by the impact of the rear floor changes, it was Aston that gave the most incensed public utterings on that topic. But Mercedes spoke its mind when it felt the need on plenty of other technical squabbles, as did Red Bull.

The early races were overshadowed by the furore regarding flexing rear wings, with Hamilton saying at May's Spanish GP that Red Bull had been running a “bendy wing” to gain a straightline speed edge ►



BRITISH GP

1 Hamilton **2** Leclerc **3** Bottas

A poor start from Hamilton leads to a Verstappen victory in the sprint race (F1's first), but the grand prix will be remembered for their thrilling first-lap driving and Copse crash, for which Hamilton is penalised. With Verstappen out, Leclerc leads, holding off Hamilton even as his engine cuts intermittently. But Hamilton's better second-stint pace means he overcomes the Ferrari late on.



HUNGARIAN GP

1 Ocon **2** Hamilton **3** Sainz

Bottas's damp Turn 1 gaffe wipes out Norris and heavily damages Verstappen. After the track dries during the red flag, everyone but Hamilton pits before the restart, which the Merc takes solo, then immediately pits for slicks. Ocon therefore leads ahead of Vettel, who is later disqualified, while Hamilton's charge is thwarted by Alonso for just long enough that he can't reach the lead fight.



BELGIAN GP

1 Verstappen **2** Russell **3** Hamilton

Not the farce of the season, but only because decisions were rightly made on safety grounds, and worse would come in Abu Dhabi. Incessant rain repeatedly pushes back the start time. The 'race' is stopped after the formation lap, 'resumed' nearly three hours later, then called with no racing having taken place. Positions are decided on qualifying order and half-points awarded.



Calamitous Bottas triggered chaos at Turn 1 in Hungary



Title rivals collided at Monza. Hamilton was lucky to escape injury

along with the impressive output of the final Honda engine. Mercedes and McLaren insisted they were not exploiting flexi-wing technology, but suspicion fell on other teams, such as Ferrari and Alfa Romeo, just as much as Red Bull. In the end, the FIA monitored wings closely from Azerbaijan onwards, and then introduced more stringent tests at the French GP at the end of June.

The FIA also moved to clamp down on 'active' pitstop technologies from Spa in late August, this viewed as more harmful to Red Bull, which had invested heavily in such equipment. But this appeared to have a knock-on effect at various teams given the spate of long pitstops that pervaded the season's second half.

In Turkey, much was made of Mercedes' rear suspension appearing to lower as its cars ran down the straights, but the team insisted it had been doing this for several seasons.

None of these technical arguments were unfamiliar F1 territory, given that exploiting politics is sound strategy in any contest, but they would pale into insignificance compared to the coming controversy on driving standards.

Those crashes

Verstappen arrived at the British GP with a 32-point lead over Hamilton, who hit back with a sensational Friday qualifying first place in front of a packed home crowd at Silverstone, which was hosting F1's first sprint weekend (and without anti-COVID measures restricting numbers). In the first race, the two title

“Having backed out of contact at Imola and Barcelona, Hamilton made a stand”

contenders thrillingly engaged in a first-lap battle after Hamilton was slow off the line, with Verstappen then surging to a dominant win. But it got nasty in the main race.

After Verstappen was slower away this time, the pair engaged in a no-holds-barred scrap that drew tremendous cheers from the crowd. But, having backed out of contact at Imola and at Barcelona, and knowing he couldn't afford to lose any further ground, Hamilton made a stand. He knew Verstappen wouldn't deviate from his aggressive stance and so rose to match it at Copse, with the contact putting the Red Bull out and sending Verstappen to hospital for checks. Hamilton also might have been out, given his front-left wheel rim was on the verge of failing, but the resulting red flag saved him.

As Christian Horner and Toto Wolff argued via the media and Michael Masi's race director channel – this year open for F1's audience for the first time – Mercedes repaired Hamilton's car. He was sent back out into a fight with Leclerc, made harder by

FORMULA 1 2021 RACE BY RACE



DUTCH GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Bottas

Verstappen delivers under incredible home pressure. He aces the start and then keeps Hamilton behind, leaving Mercedes to try a two-stopper. But Verstappen has Hamilton covered, even when Bottas is briefly used as a rolling roadblock. The late-race attention goes to Mercedes' attempts to get the fastest lap, which Hamilton finally does after a late third stop.



ITALIAN GP

1 Ricciardo **2** Norris **3** Bottas

Bottas wins the sprint ahead of Verstappen, which Hamilton starts poorly. In the main race, with fresh-engined Bottas starting last, Ricciardo jumps polesitter Verstappen and keeps him behind. A slow Red Bull stop drops Verstappen behind Hamilton, and the pair crash on the Mercedes' out-lap. Ricciardo wins ahead of Norris, McLaren taking F1's only 1-2 of 2021.



RUSSIAN GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Sainz

Sainz seizes the lead from polesitter Norris at Turn 2. He stops early with badly worn medium tyres, while Norris gets through the graining phase and commandingly leads. Hamilton runs second before the rain arrives, where he eventually heeds Mercedes' advice to pit, and McLaren and Norris mess up on when to take inters. The rain helps Verstappen rescue second from last on the grid.

Verstappen charged from the back to second in Russia to limit damage



the 10s penalty he got for the crash with Verstappen, and won that to slash his rival's lead to eight points.

When Bottas's Hungary Turn 1 shocker sent Norris smashing into Verstappen, Red Bull's series leader could only recover to what eventually became ninth. Hamilton gained 16 points with second place behind Esteban Ocon (and the disqualified Sebastian Vettel). But it could have been more had Mercedes not sent Hamilton out for the restart on intermediates, which left him starting solo as the rest pitted for slicks and gained critical ground that left him battling back from last. The Spa washout farce handed Verstappen a free five-point gain, and then he delivered under great pressure at home at Zandvoort to retake the points lead. Then came Monza and the pair's second crash.

This one followed a long Red Bull pitstop after Verstappen had gifted Daniel Ricciardo the lead at the start — Hamilton had handed the Australian ground with a similar bad getaway in the sprint race (won by Bottas) the previous day. Hamilton emerged from the pits ahead of the angry Verstappen, who sent his car alongside at the Rettifilo chicane and, with Hamilton not moving wider in response, he clattered over the kerbs and was launched on top of the Mercedes, putting both out and coming frighteningly close to seriously injuring Hamilton. This time, the stewards penalised Verstappen, with Wolff calling his actions a “tactical foul” given it preserved his now five-point lead (thanks to his second place in the sprint race).

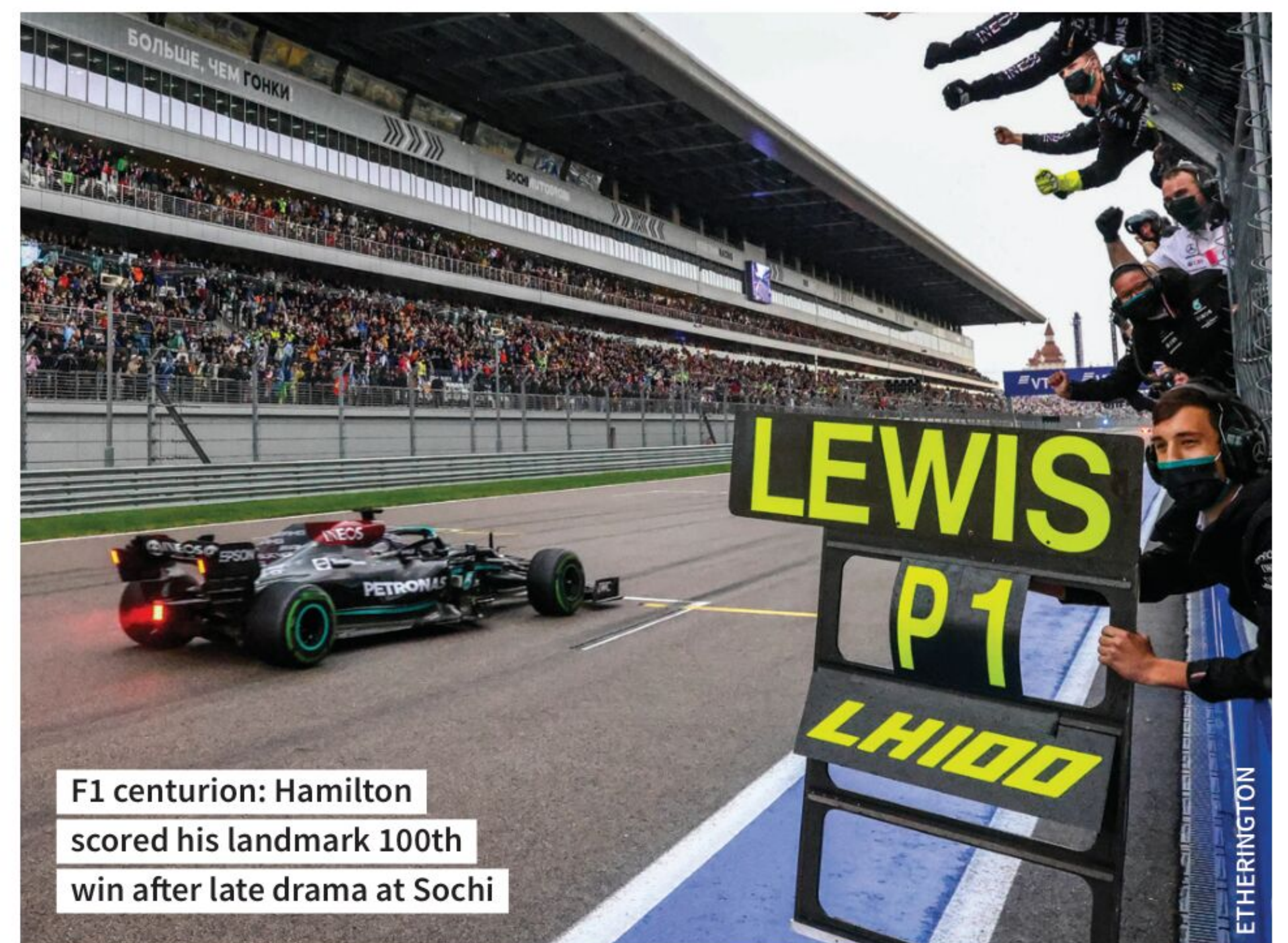
Reliability follows upgrades as key focus

Although it won just once in the five-race stretch that included Silverstone, Mercedes actually had a much improved package. This was because of the final aerodynamic upgrade it had introduced for the British GP, which included major bargeboard alterations and a new floor arrangement.

That put Mercedes right with Red Bull on pure pace — ahead at some tracks, and ready to capitalise if its rival went the wrong way on set-up calls or with understanding tyres. Both these things happened, most notably on the reworked Istanbul Park surface that meant wet-weather star Verstappen was humbled by Bottas there, and as the temperatures changed during qualifying in Mexico. Mercedes actually felt that the Silverstone upgrade worked better than expected, and it finally revealed that it never spent its two permitted development tokens for 2021, with ideas to use these on front-end innovations being abandoned.

Mercedes did face a much harder time getting the W12 anywhere near the set-up sweet spot enjoyed with the all-conquering W11, but it improved as the season went on and really got the most out of its neutered package. Even so, it did have to contend with one problem the W11 did not to the same extent: reliability.

Its 2021 engine provided a performance gain, but that came at the price of mileage, with Mercedes' internal combustion engine degrading significantly. This would require Bottas to take three grid drops in four races during the season's second half, and Hamilton to get new ICEs in Turkey and Brazil. ▶



F1 centurion: Hamilton scored his landmark 100th win after late drama at Sochi



TURKISH GP

1 Bottas **2** Verstappen **3** Perez

Bottas dominates from a pole he inherits from Hamilton taking a new ICE. Verstappen never has the pace to threaten, with Red Bull undone by the reworked surface and not getting the tyres to work optimally in all conditions. Leclerc fails in an ambitious no-stop attempt to win the damp race, while Hamilton recovers to fifth, after a gamble to wait for his switch to slicks backfires.



UNITED STATES GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Perez

Hamilton's sliding rear end helps Verstappen take a surprising pole, which he squanders with a poor start. But the Red Bull threatens throughout the first stint and gets ahead with an aggressively early first stop. Once the ill Perez falls away in third, Mercedes gives Hamilton a tyre-life offset for the third stint, but his charge stalls late on and Verstappen holds on to win a nailbiter.



MEXICAN GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Perez

Red Bull underperforms in qualifying, with Mercedes locking out the front row, but Verstappen produces a stunning pass at Turn 1, with polesitter Bottas spun at Turn 1 by a Ricciardo clip. Two cars crash in the aftermath. It's a dull affair after this, and Verstappen romps clear to win by 16.6s, while Hamilton holds off the late-stopping Perez's second-stint charge.

Verstappen also had to cope with the reliability factor – he started last in Russia when Red Bull needed to expand his power unit parts pool to safely make the end of the season. His charge and superb rise to second in the late rain in Sochi meant he mitigated the points loss in Hamilton's 100th F1 victory, which featured Norris as the unfortunate long-time leader, but Verstappen insisted that a new Honda engine never packed the freshness punch Red Bull claimed Mercedes enjoyed – two tenths with each new ICE.

Red Bull stuns and then delivers in America

As form swung from track to track, F1 made a return to the United States, where Hamilton has an impeccable record. But Verstappen roared to pole, even though Red Bull had to cope with its rear wings cracking on the severe Austin bumps in practice – the choices over high or low-downforce arrangements at both squads to find a set-up edge and aid tyre management were a theme of the year.

Mercedes would be incensed by Red Bull regularly having to replace rear-wing parts over the season run-in as the Milton Keynes squad battled a DRS actuator and mechanism problem that led to its rear wings oscillating at top speed, but it could not stop Verstappen's eighth win of 10 in the campaign. This followed Hamilton making an excellent getaway to beat Verstappen into Turn 1, but then being undercut at the first stops and having a late charge with a tyre-life advantage fall short.

Two weeks later in Mexico, Red Bull's tyre woes were exacerbated by it messing up trying tow tactics in qualifying, but Verstappen rescued victory with the pass of the season to overtake both Mercedes into Turn 1. Hamilton couldn't quite hide his disappointment at polesitter Bottas not blocking his rival, saying "he left the door open for Max", which meant the pair went to Brazil with Verstappen 19 points ahead.



Verstappen passed both Mercedes to score a great victory in Mexico City

“Onboard footage two days after showed he was hardly wrestling to make the apex”

The FIA's big late calls

At Interlagos, Hamilton lost a stunning Friday qualifying first place when his rear wing failed scrutineering – its DRS screws had come loose and the right side was opening a tad too much as the system was activated. But he charged from last in the sprint race (another Bottas win, after he beat Verstappen into Turn 1 using a softer-tyre advantage) to finish fifth. Then, from 10th after his final engine-change grid drop, he quickly battled up to chase Verstappen.

His late Turn 4 passing attempt was highly contentious, but only because of what Verstappen did in sending his car back up the inside and then falling off the road on the exit, taking his rival with him. He claimed that this was due to low grip on worn tyres, but onboard footage only available two days after the event showed he was hardly wrestling to make the apex. Hamilton was able to remount and execute the pass by positioning his car to give Verstappen no chance of repeating his move, and went on to take one of his best-ever wins. But, with Masi opting to let Verstappen 'play on', it created conditions for further controversy.

In Qatar, Hamilton shot to a dominant win from pole, seemingly using the fuel of the injustice he felt from the Brazil qualifying disqualification (this had been accompanied by Verstappen getting fined €50,000 for touching Hamilton's car in parc ferme, a needless indiscretion). Red Bull was also kicking off about Mercedes' rear wing seeming to flex and leave marks – according to Horner – which the Black Arrows team rebuffed.

Red Bull was jittery about Mercedes' late season straightline speed, which was a focus again when the team revealed that Hamilton had not been running his fresher engine in Qatar, since it wanted him to feel its benefit on the super-fast new track in Jeddah. There, Hamilton started on pole after Verstappen ruined potentially one of F1's best-ever pole laps with his last-Q3-corner crash. But the race featured three more contentious passing clashes and one more crash, with Verstappen effectively penalised for three incidents – including the late collision.

In two of the overtaking clashes, Verstappen was going to the line Masi had set in Brazil and then failed to clarify after that race (the following Qatar drivers' briefing went on for over an

FORMULA 1 2021 RACE BY RACE



SAO PAULO GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Bottas

The race of the season. Controversy reigns after qualifying, with the disqualified Hamilton charging from last to fifth in the sprint, which Bottas wins after beating Verstappen into Turn 1. In the GP, Hamilton rapidly rises from his engine-change grid-penalty 10th place starting spot to beat Verstappen, who reverses Bottas's Turn 1 pass, then later aggressively engages Hamilton again.



QATAR GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Alonso

Hamilton utterly dominates from pole, with Verstappen dropped back from qualifying second to start seventh for missing yellow flags late in Q3. He moves up rapidly at the start to rescue second, while punctures blight the race behind. Alonso finishes third after Bottas's left-front failure puts him out and a late VSC stymies Perez's recovery drive from a Q2 exit.



SAUDI ARABIAN GP

1 Hamilton **2** Verstappen **3** Bottas

The title contenders clash twice and crash, with Verstappen found at fault for all three incidents. He trails the Mercedes pair early on before Mick Schumacher's accident triggers the first of two red flags. Hamilton wins after Verstappen allows him past following a robust defence. Verstappen is also found to have braked erratically, causing Hamilton to hit him before the Mercedes is allowed ahead.



Verstappen takes the flag in Abu Dhabi at the end of a dramatic last lap to become F1 champion

hour), which was why he said afterwards: “In Brazil it was fine and now suddenly I get a penalty for it.”

The pair arrived for the season finale level on points. And the controversial calls didn’t stop coming. At the start, with Verstappen on soft tyres after messing up his set of advantageous mediums in Q2, he was slow away, but then sent another aggressive dive to Hamilton’s inside at the first chance he got. This time, he did well to stay on track, but Hamilton cut the next corner, with Masi deciding he’d not gained a lasting advantage.

From there, Verstappen’s inferior tyre strategy and weaker race pace looked to have the contest ending in Hamilton’s favour. But Nicholas Latifi’s crash five laps from home threatened it all, with Verstappen pitting again. Masi allowed the lapped cars between them through to set up the final-lap showdown that Verstappen edged.

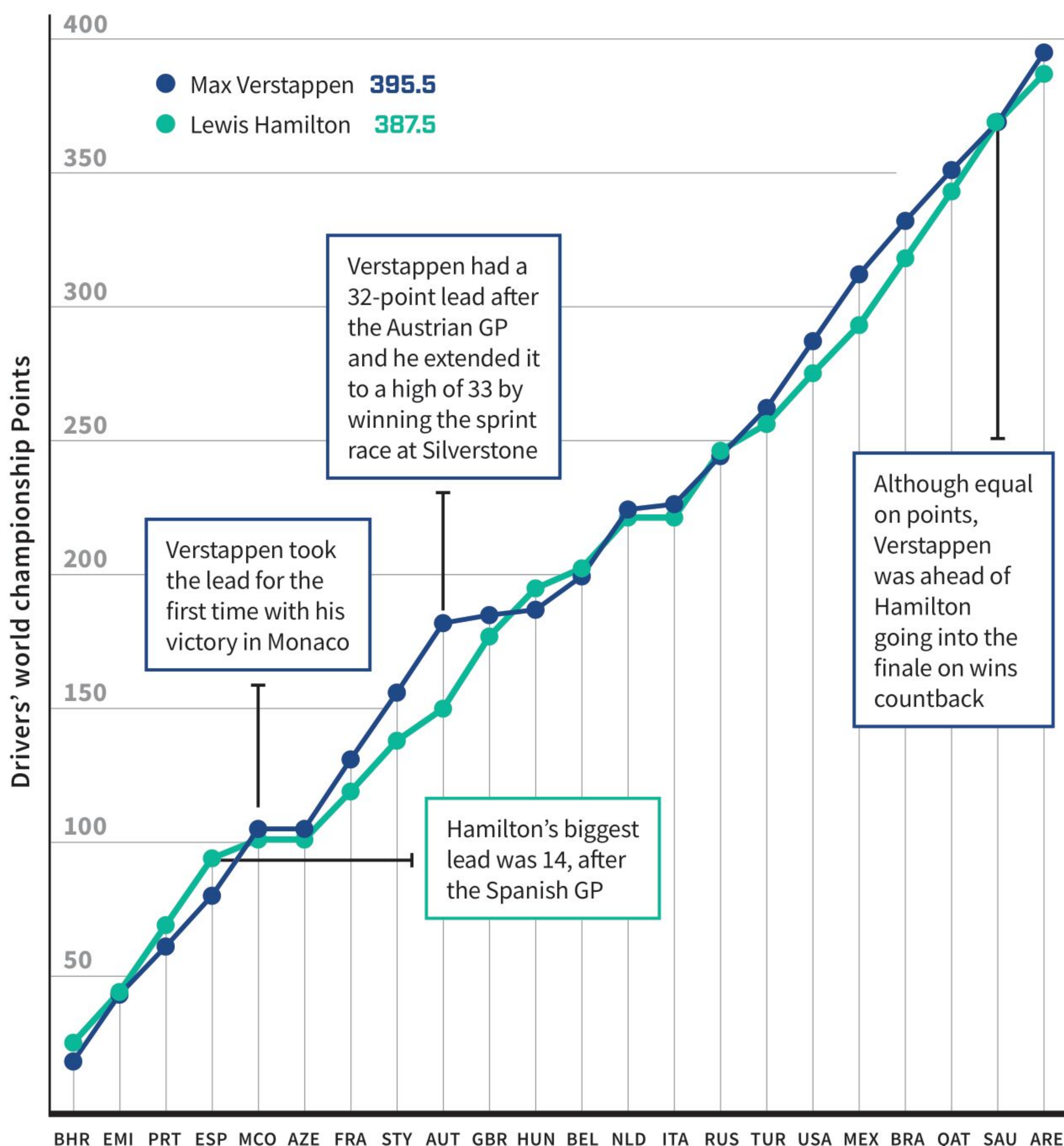
“Unbelievable!” cried the winner. “This has been manipulated,” said his opponent.

The season still wasn’t done. Verstappen became champion ‘again’ when Mercedes (which clinched the constructors’ title when

Perez, Red Bull’s hero for his mid-race defence against Hamilton, retired under the late safety car) had its pair of post-race protests thrown out. Then his title was clinched for a third time when Mercedes withdrew its intention to appeal those decisions, because it didn’t think it would win with the FIA’s court of appeal judging the governing body’s own decisions.

And so, there was to be no final off-track coda. This year of years went to Max Verstappen. ■

HOW THE TITLE WAS WON



ABU DHABI GP

1 Verstappen **2** Hamilton **3** Sainz

The title contenders fight before Hamilton scampers clear. Hamilton pits, and is held up by Perez. Verstappen stops under a VSC and safety car to take fresh rubber, while Hamilton can’t without giving up track position. It’s pivotal when Michael Masi allows lapped cars to move past Hamilton, having initially ruled against it, and Verstappen passes in a controversial one-lap shootout.



TOP 10 DRIVERS

The leading performers from a remarkable year

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY

motorsport
IMAGES

10 Sergio Perez

▼ DOWN 4

Perez is boosted into this position because of the way he took the fight in wheel-to-wheel battles against his team's principal rival better than did Valtteri Bottas, which ultimately made a difference in Max Verstappen's triumph against Lewis Hamilton. His aggressive, yet always fair, defending in the Turkey rain against the Mercedes was one example, as was his Abu Dhabi performance.

The problem is that Bottas was better on an individual level, with Perez unable to regularly get near Verstappen's performances on pure pace. Only one front-row start in the season's best package is a poor return, and there were Q2 eliminations in Bahrain and Qatar.

That said, there were enough occasions where he did what Red Bull needed him to – supporting Verstappen, or being a strategic problem for Mercedes (Baku, Paul Ricard). Perez also showed his typical prowess with tyre management to make big gains from lower starting spots, such as in Monaco, where he overcut three rivals – including Hamilton – to make a late charge towards the podium positions.

He learned that the only way to be fast in the RB16B was to go along with Verstappen's set-up. After finding that changes made mid-season to make things more comfortable slowed him down even if they made the car easier to drive, he demonstrated that he can make progress with plenty of hours in the simulator. This resulted in his late-season run of three consecutive podiums.



ANDRE



COATES



ANDRE

9 Fernando Alonso

—RE-ENTRY

Formula 1 is a much better competition with Alonso in it. His inch-perfect driving in several battles was thrilling. George Russell went toe to toe with him in the Austrian Grand Prix and lost his shot at his first Williams points to Alonso's tenacity, and the Spaniard was incisive to pass Pierre Gasly in the early corners in Qatar, which would be crucial to his first F1 podium finish for seven years.

But it was his scrap with Lewis Hamilton in the closing stages of the Hungarian GP that will live longest in the memory. Alonso used the narrow confines of the Hungaroring to keep the resurgent Mercedes back for 10 laps, and this proved critical in preventing Hamilton from jeopardising Alpine team-mate Esteban Ocon's lead.

There were errors, such as clattering Mick Schumacher in Turkey and spinning solo in Jeddah. But what impressed most in the first season of Alonso's comeback was how he made gains over a single lap against a rapid team-mate. In the end he defeated Ocon 11-10 in qualifying and was a regular opening-lap star.

He also showcased his own knack of keeping tyres alive on many occasions, which might have got him onto the podium in Russia were it not for the rain arriving, and him staying out too long when it did. It definitely paid off in Qatar, where he made a difficult and risky one-stopper work to great effect ahead of Sergio Perez.



ETHERINGTON

8 Valtteri Bottas

▼ DOWN 1

Bottas's 2021 campaign summed up why he lost his Mercedes seat to George Russell for 2022, but also showed how close he came to saving it.

On the positive front, he topped three qualifying sessions (but is daftly credited with four poles thanks to F1's rules regarding engine-change grid penalties and the sprint-race results), which demonstrates his enduring pace compared to Hamilton. And he managed well in tricky conditions for Mercedes in Monaco when it came to getting the softer tyres up to temperature where his illustrious team-mate could not. He won brilliantly in Turkey – and obliterated the memory of his humiliation there nearly 11 months earlier – ahead of Verstappen, a wet-weather star. Overall, he was excellent at Monza and overcame the worst of Mercedes' reliability woes with his typical controlled, understated class. And he ended up as the top sprint winner in 2021 with two victories.

But he couldn't produce his best consistently, and when things were bad they were disastrous. In between getting outfoxed by Charles Leclerc on the first laps in Bahrain and Spain, he was so far from the front at a wet Imola, where he couldn't fire up his intermediate tyres, that he was lapped. Then came the crash with Russell. Baku was poor, with similar tyre warm-up struggles. Also, his inferiority on tyre management compared to Hamilton prevented him pulling off many of Mercedes' strategy choices.



7 George Russell

▲ UP 1

There's no doubt that the Williams squad has been steadily working its way back up the pecking order since its disastrous years in 2018 and 2019, but the team really benefited from having one of the grid's top talents completing a third season.

Russell's one-lap speed was again the highlight in a Williams package and operation that excelled at getting high-profile results against the clock – the team knew it could afford to take all-or-nothing calls, and that Russell would generally deliver when they mattered. Although this sometimes backfired, as in Q2 in Turkey, his speed under pressure resulted in a Q1 escape run that stretched to 10 races. And it led to his Spa front row and podium in the washout that followed. He again put a Williams where it had no place being with his third place in qualifying in Sochi.

Williams insiders say Russell's best assets include his adaptability, self-assurance in taking decisions, and galvanising those around him, while his Grand Prix Drivers' Association directorship and confidence with the media demonstrate his maturity. He's also getting better on in-race matters such as tyre management, as Paul Ricard proved, and wheel-to-wheel battles – his Austrian GP scrap with Alonso was stirring. But there's still a slight impetuosity that he must keep under control, such as his Imola crash with Valtteri Bottas. And his season rather fizzled out with a lack of late highlights too.

6 Pierre Gasly

▼ DOWN 3

Gasly's comfort at AlphaTauri, which produced a forgiving package for last year, continued in 2021 – no surprise given the car carryover requirements in the rules – and he had a second consecutive excellent season. There was no win this time, but Gasly shone again.

He nailed his target of being more consistent this year, and he also felt he delivered as a more complete driver. He still struggled occasionally when things weren't going totally smoothly, such as when AlphaTauri didn't have the best strategy, as in Qatar where he fell from second on the grid. Or when he was trapped in the pack, or couldn't get everything prepared properly, such as in Abu Dhabi qualifying.

But in general, Gasly delivered excellent

performances time and again, particularly in qualifying. He used a handy set-up approach to keep high-corner speed while pushing at turn-in and still have the car stay compliant, which generally paid off massively and rewarded Gasly's confidence when the pressure was on. The only thing that makes assessing the Frenchman's performances this year tricky was his team-mate Yuki Tsunoda being a rookie who delivered inconsistent results across the season.

Gasly can't be blamed for that and he led the line superbly for AlphaTauri all year. His best result was when he capitalised on the Baku chaos while dealing with a power problem to take third, but his Ferrari-beating performances at Zandvoort and in Mexico were even better.





5 Carlos Sainz Jr

▲ UP 4

Sainz's start to his Ferrari career has been excellent. It must be noted that the team went into the year with no chance of battling for titles, or wins in chaos-free races, but a driver can only shine in the circumstances put before them. And Sainz did that. His biggest weak point versus team-mate Charles Leclerc came in qualifying, where he was beaten 13-8, but that in itself is far from a bad record, and Sainz produced some sterling against-the-clock drives in 2021.

The highlight was his front-row start in Sochi, where he led the early stages ahead of Lando Norris before having to pit during the graining phase on the mediums because Ferrari was still scarred by its tyre-wear disaster in France. There was a tricky run through the summer and early autumn with a string of heavy practice crashes, but Sainz was able to work his way past this by resetting his approach to the weekend, and trying to ensure that he was peaking pace-wise when it mattered. Also, he targeted better starts and produced these by the end of the year, culminating in his fine sprint race third place in Brazil, where he demonstrated his nous by spotting falling temperatures on the grid and plumping for soft tyres.

He ended the year with four podiums – a fine return – and showed no signs that the pressurised Ferrari atmosphere will change his focused and engaging attitude.

4 Charles Leclerc

— NO CHANGE

Once again, Leclerc shone for Ferrari in 2021. He may have ended the year with just a single podium visit to his team-mate's four, but he also came closest to ending the team's victory drought and was a regular best-of-the-rest in races where no drama befell the frontrunners at Red Bull and Mercedes.

Frustrating occasional errors also popped up again, often in qualifying, although this remained his strongest suit since he's so fast overall. A heavy kerb strike led to a cracked chassis and Q2 exit in Qatar, and then of course there was his Monaco Q3 crash that proved to be both blessing and curse on home soil.

But that shouldn't dampen what was another excellent season, where Leclerc had to deal with a string of misfortune. This included the red flag stealing the results of his tremendous driving to all but seal third place in the damp first half at Imola; the engine-mapping problem holding him back when in the lead at Silverstone; and Lance Stroll wiping him out at the start in Hungary.

His race at the British Grand Prix was his highlight. He defied Lewis Hamilton in tough, hot conditions in the post-restart first stint when tyre wear had been Ferrari's big weak point a month earlier in France, but his silverware-less results in Spain, Turkey and the United States were utterly brilliant too.



3 Lando Norris

▲ UP 7

From charming in-house up-and-comer to, in effect, McLaren team leader – it was quite a progression for Norris in 2021. He'd come into the year with a new team-mate – a very highly rated one in Daniel Ricciardo – but he turned any concerns about what this might do for his reputation into an enhanced and enshrined standing.

Norris was rapid from the off, finishing as best of the rest in Bahrain and nearly claiming a shock pole at Imola. That would come in Sochi, where he lost a first F1 win to a combined misjudgement of the worsening weather conditions with his McLaren squad, but before that were three podiums in the season's first half and then a career-best second place backing up Ricciardo at Monza, where he had the edge on pure pace.

He still needs to be better at adapting his driving when his car hasn't got the perfect set-up, and knows a calmer approach in a repeat Sochi scenario is what's needed. But he can pinpoint his struggles with corner-entry instability, and this year was unafraid to voice his opinions to help McLaren chase an optimum set-up.

Norris was also unlucky with his pair of late-season punctures ruining good results, although must cop the blame for moving over on Carlos Sainz Jr at the Sao Paulo GP start. But he can reflect happily that whenever there was the chance of a glittering result left by the top teams, he seized it.



2 Max Verstappen

— NO CHANGE

A worthy and brilliant world champion who only misses out on the top spot in this list by a fraction – the combined result of his needlessly over-aggressive driving in Jeddah, and Lewis Hamilton producing a slightly higher peak when up against it in Brazil.

Verstappen was superb in 2021, although his campaign was peppered with small mistakes, such as throwing away the early lead in the French GP. But he battled back to take a famous win, undoing Mercedes' previous dominance at Paul Ricard in a brilliantly executed strategic race with a late tyre-life advantage. This really summed up how far he and Red Bull had come.

He was able to deal with immense pressure yet seemed to bow to it at different times. He had a stunning victory in front of a demanding home crowd at Zandvoort and produced a brilliant double pass to get back ahead in Mexico after his squad had messed up qualifying. Then there was his Qatar yellow-flag gaffe, Jeddah Q3 crash and Abu Dhabi Q2 lock-up.

But when he needed to be inch perfect – in two passes in the season finale, only one of which came off – he delivered and then the circumstances came to him. But perhaps the finest glory of his season is that he remained the only driver able to get the best out of the tricky Red Bull package, even with a proven quantity such as Sergio Perez alongside him.

1 Lewis Hamilton

— NO CHANGE

This was not Hamilton’s best F1 campaign overall, but he produced the very highest levels of driving skill in 2021 and did so with what must go down as just about the slightly inferior package compared to the Red Bull.

There were errors – and big ones. At Imola, Hamilton was desperate to avoid dropping early points and that resulted in his slide into the gravel in traffic. The red flag saved him from going a lap down, but his charge back to second was a lesson in dealing with adversity. He put Baku down to a “mechanical problem” – a mistake waiting to happen with the ‘magic’ brake bias alteration button unguarded – but he still pressed it when he hadn’t before.

And although Hamilton regularly turned out of contact with Max Verstappen, wisely knowing it was better to survive without damage to bank regular points, he still had to give as good as he got. This came at Silverstone, where Hamilton was penalised for the Copse crash, where he knew he couldn’t afford to back down again. He rightly copped a penalty there but, in the rest of their wheel-to-wheel clashes in 2021, it was hard to see how Hamilton could have done anything differently (other than not running Verstappen wide late on in Jeddah, which appeared to be more of an exasperated reaction in the confusing post-contact scenes).

He had to work hard with Mercedes in 2021. There were times when this went awry and in Monaco led to an off-weekend in which he struggled to build tyre temperature, but Hamilton was a regular visitor for simulator sessions where before that hadn’t always been deemed necessary. He and Mercedes grappled with getting the W12 and its rear-end instability set-up towards a specific handling sweetspot he felt they hit only once: in Brazil, where he won the race of the season with a terrific passing display.

Hamilton also felt he had to be more forceful with his team to drive it on to chase every last drop of performance from a package that did not have any major aerodynamic upgrades after July’s British GP, although he was always full of praise for its efforts.

During the first half of 2021, Hamilton suggested he raced under the cloud of long-COVID, although stopped short of saying he definitely had the condition. But it was clear after his Hungarian GP charge that things were a real physical challenge, not helped by having to isolate so much to avoid missing a race as he did in 2020. But by the end of 2021, any specific health fears were gone and the final races also highlighted again his worth as an off-track champion, with his public statements on human rights and homosexuality in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and his rainbow helmet livery showing solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community for the final events.

The charges made his season. All but one of his eight wins – Qatar, where he dominated from pole – came in such circumstances, when he brought his supreme pace and tyre-management skills to bear brilliantly once again. The eighth world title wasn’t to be, and in controversial circumstances, but Hamilton is still at F1’s peak.

19 How the Formula 1 team bosses – and you, our readers – rated the drivers



KRENEK/MERCEDES

THE 2020 TOP 10

- | | |
|----|------------|
| 1 | Hamilton |
| 2 | Verstappen |
| 3 | Gasly |
| 4 | Leclerc |
| 5 | Ricciardo |
| 6 | Perez |
| 7 | Bottas |
| 8 | Russell |
| 9 | Sainz |
| 10 | Norris |

FERRARI PARTS SPECIALIST

SUPERFORMANCE

LARGEST
INDEPENDENT
SUPPLIER OF
PARTS FOR
FERRARI CARS

OFFICIAL
DISTRIBUTOR FOR
HILL ENGINEERING

UNRIVALLED
ENGINEERING AND
TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

CONTINUOUS
REMANUFACTURING
OF OBSOLETE AND
UNAVAILABLE PARTS

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TO COPE
SMALL ENOUGH
TO CARE

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RATINGS

The bosses' top 10

JONATHAN NOBLE

Max Verstappen has topped the annual team principals' top 10 drivers ranking, knocking Lewis Hamilton off the number-one spot.

The two drivers have dominated the rankings over recent years, finishing as the top two every year since 2016. But this is the first time Verstappen has emerged ahead.

In what has become a long-standing tradition created by Autosport, each of the F1 team bosses was asked to pick their top 10 drivers of the year. The individual results are kept secret – so the team principals can answer honestly – and the tally totted up using F1's points structure, which runs from 25 for first down to one point for 10th.

Verstappen earned 188 points compared to Hamilton's 174. Lando Norris moved up to third overall off the back of a hugely impressive season with McLaren, which included taking his maiden pole position at the Russian Grand Prix. He was the highest climber in the top 10, along with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr, both gaining four spots on their 2020 positions, while the returning Fernando Alonso was fifth.

Despite their wins in the Azerbaijan and Italian GPs respectively, Sergio Perez (fifth in 2020) and Daniel Ricciardo (fourth) have fallen outside the top 10.

The only team that did not take part was Ferrari. ■

HOW THE TEAM CHIEFS VOTED



1
Max Verstappen
▲ UP 1
188pts



2
Lewis Hamilton
▼ DOWN 1
174pts



3
Lando Norris
▲ UP 4
100pts



4
Carlos Sainz Jr
▲ UP 4
70pts



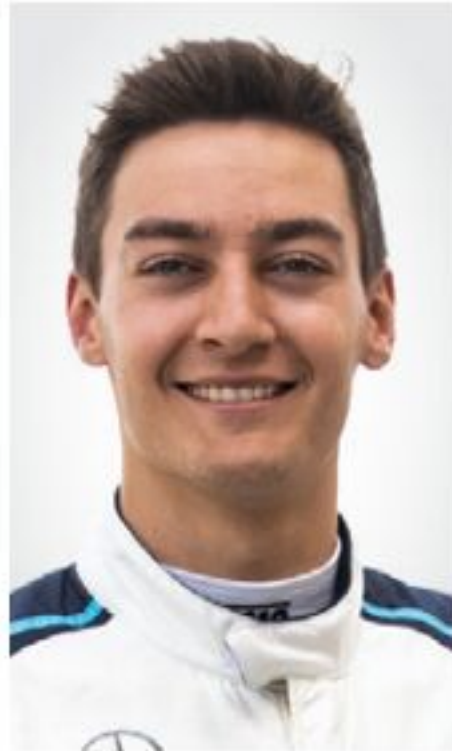
5
Fernando Alonso
— RE-ENTRY
63pts



6
Charles Leclerc
▼ DOWN 3
58pts



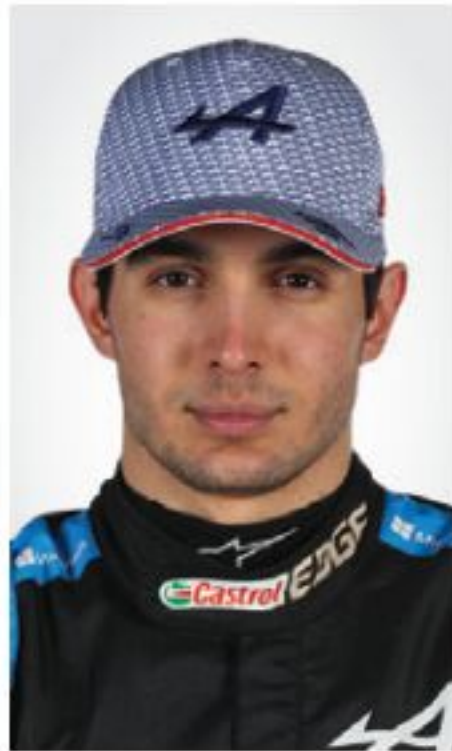
7
Pierre Gasly
▲ UP 3
56pts



8
George Russell
▼ DOWN 2
44pts



9
Valtteri Bottas
— NO CHANGE
43pts



10
Esteban Ocon
— RE-ENTRY
41pts

WHO VOTED



Toto Wolff
Mercedes



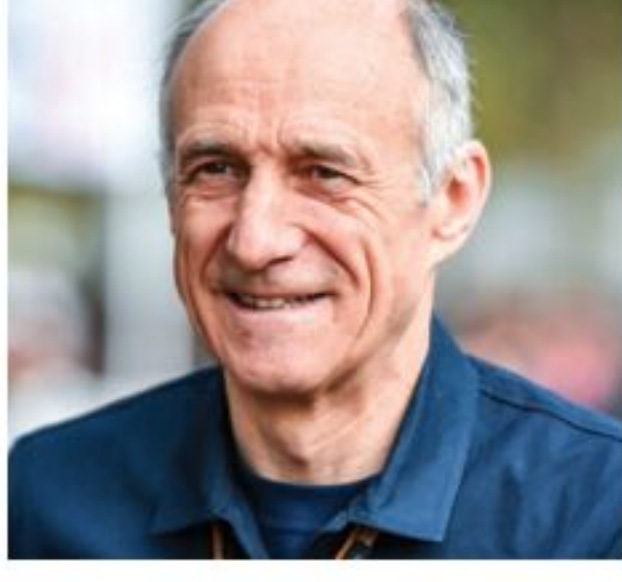
Christian Horner
Red Bull



Andreas Seidl
McLaren



Laurent Rossi
Alpine



Franz Tost
AlphaTauri



Otmar Szafnauer
Aston Martin



Jost Capito
Williams



Fred Vasseur
Alfa Romeo



Gunther Steiner
Haas

PAST TWO SEASONS

2020

- Hamilton
- Verstappen
- Leclerc
- Ricciardo
- Perez
- Russell
- Norris
- Sainz
- Bottas
- Gasly

2019

- Hamilton
- Verstappen
- Leclerc
- Bottas
- Vettel
- Albon
- Sainz
- Ricciardo
- Russell
- Norris

READERS' DRIVER RATINGS

How Autosport.com readers scored the drivers across the 22-race season, taking the average race rating for each driver. Excludes Robert Kubica, who averaged 6.1 across his two outings.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Verstappen 8.2 | 8 Russell 6.8 | 15 Raikkonen 6.0 |
| 2 Norris 8.1 | 9 Ocon 6.5 | 16 Schumacher 5.8 |
| 3 Hamilton 8.0 | 10 Ricciardo 6.5 | 17 Stroll 5.6 |
| 4 Gasly 7.6 | 11 Perez 6.4 | 18 Tsunoda 5.4 |
| 5 Leclerc 7.6 | 12 Vettel 6.4 | 19 Latifi 5.2 |
| 6 Sainz 7.5 | 13 Giovinazzi 6.2 | 20 Mazepin 3.5 |
| 7 Alonso 7.2 | 14 Bottas 6.1 | |

GIORGIO
PIOLA 

The big impact of small changes

The pandemic-induced delay of F1's design reset meant teams had to run tweaked versions of the previous season's cars, restricted by a token system for updates

GIORGIO PIOLA AND JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

The immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the 2020 Formula 1 calendar, necessitating circuits to double up on races to get in a full 17-round season within the space of six months. And its effects lingered into 2021; the calendar was largely back to normal, but the mandatory shutdowns for F1 teams to simply survive the March to June 2020 lockdown prompted the delay of the expected ground-effect regulations to 2022.

Instead, teams were effectively railroaded into producing a field of B-spec cars that were heavily restricted in their development from 2020's machinery. The FIA introduced a token system, with teams handed two tokens to spend on updating their cars for the new season. Although aerodynamic parts were largely unrestricted, larger areas — such as crash structures, geometry changes and the like — were each given a token value to stop teams throwing money they couldn't

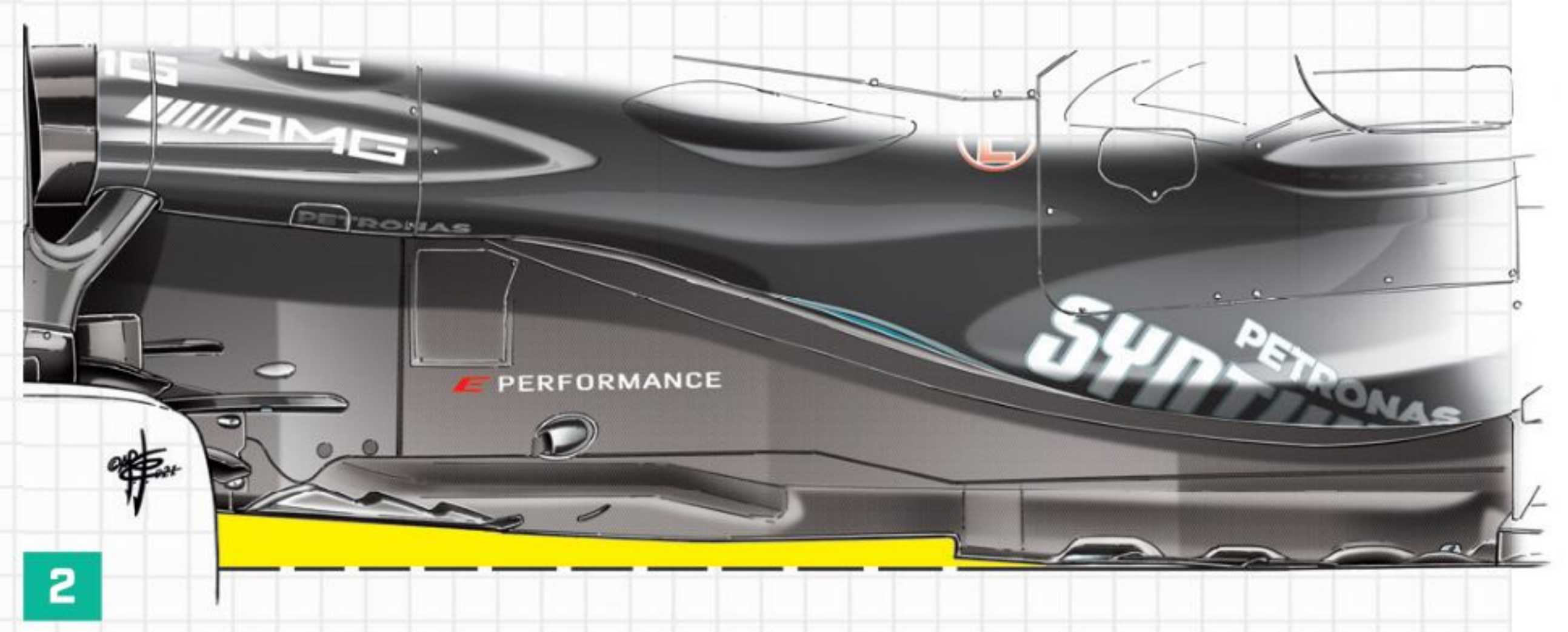
afford to spend on big-ticket items.

In the meantime, F1 introduced a change to the floor design to reduce the overall downforce, cutting a triangular section out of the floor ahead of the rear wheels while simultaneously reducing the size of the diffuser. This was in a bid to peg back the loads faced by the Pirelli tyres, which effectively retained the same construction as in 2019 and were therefore not designed to cope with the ever-increasing downforce outputs. Pirelli eventually beefed up the internals to curb delaminations under load, but the floor changes remained in place, and arguably contributed to one of the best title battles in years.

There were plenty of key plot points in this year's tech war too, even though a number of teams signed off 2021 early and planted their focus into getting the switch to 2022's all-new formula right. Let's look at how each team developed over the course of the year.



1



2

Mercedes vs Red Bull

A title battle for the ages

Perhaps the most compelling storyline at the beginning of 2021 concerned the floor changes and how they affected each team. Mercedes, famed for its low-rake design ethos, looked to have ended up in a precarious position as Red Bull, running the most extreme high-rake concept, suddenly cemented its place as a title contender after years on the periphery. Lewis Hamilton, for the first time in a few seasons, was going to have outside competition, as Mercedes bravely elected to spend none of its allotted tokens on updating last year's W11 into 2021's W12 contender.

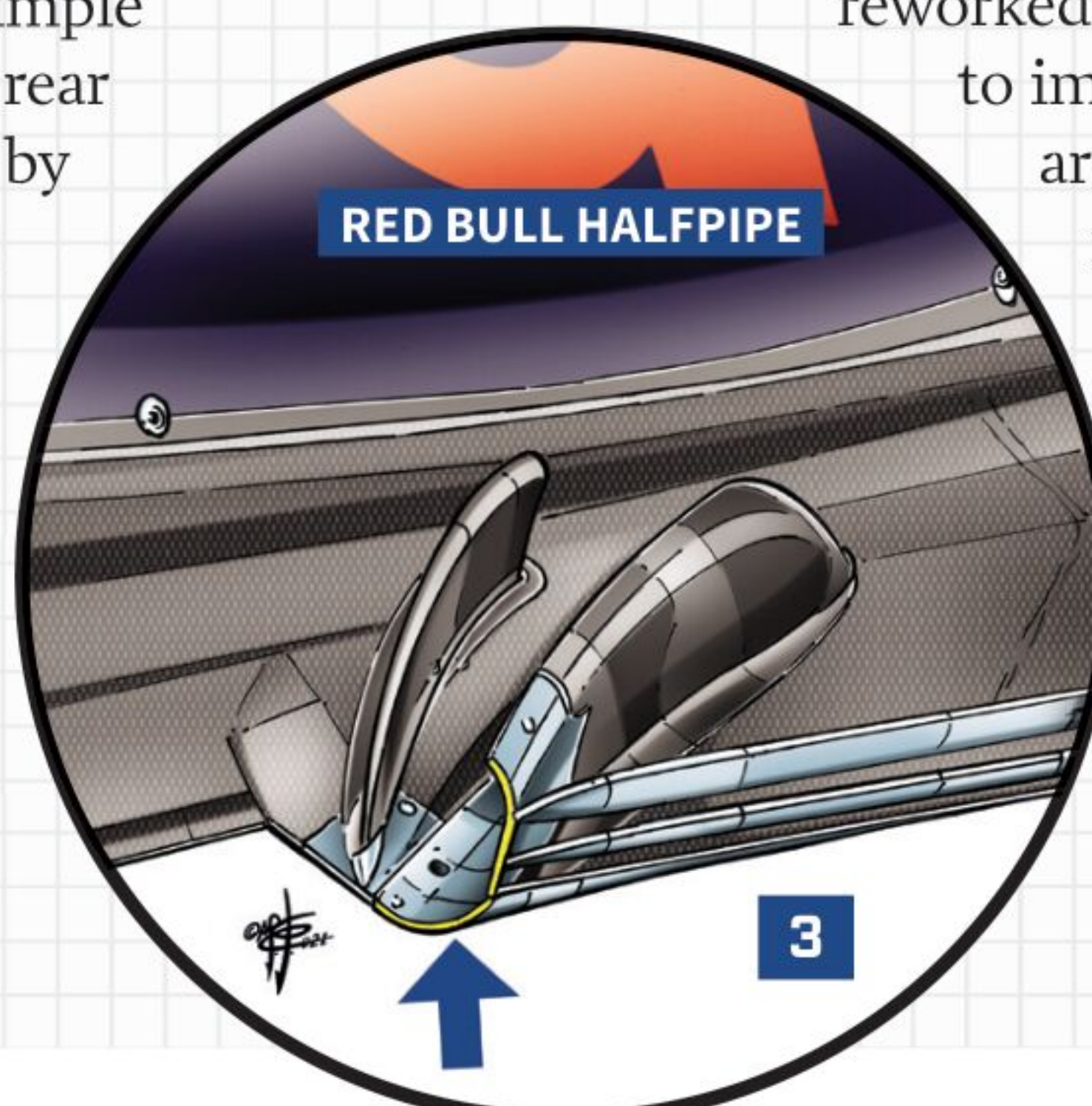
Although Mercedes and Red Bull both began testing with a floor that perhaps the rules had intended, with a simple diagonal cut from its edge to the part in front of the rear wheel, it was clear that limiting the deficit intended by those cuts would be both teams' early-season focus. Red Bull had less to find, as the higher positioning of the rear end naturally creates more downforce at the expense of more drag, while Mercedes had to rebuild the protection it had lost over the underbody flow.

Mercedes and Red Bull decided not to show off their floors at their respective launches, avoiding the chance of giving their rivals something to put

in the windtunnel before the opening race. But by the end of testing, the two teams ended up with a 'Z-shaped' floor [1][2]. It sounds counterproductive to cut more of the floor off than needed, but the exposed corner appeared to generate a stronger vortex that could be employed as a prophylactic measure to keep the underbody flow protected. This also gave the two teams opportunities to mount fins on top of it to help drive airflow outwards, and the floor space directly in front of the rear tyre also offered an opportunity to do that.

As the two teams with the most resource, Mercedes and Red Bull continued to hone their floors. Red Bull

reworked the Z-floor corner into a halfpipe design to improve the channelling of airflow in that area [3]. But with an anticipated stop point for 2021 developments, with everyone keenly aware of the need to pin focus on 2022, Mercedes principal Toto Wolff announced that the team had ended its design of new parts for the current season. Tech chief James Allison added that only parts already in the pipeline would later appear on the car. This emerged at Silverstone when ►



3

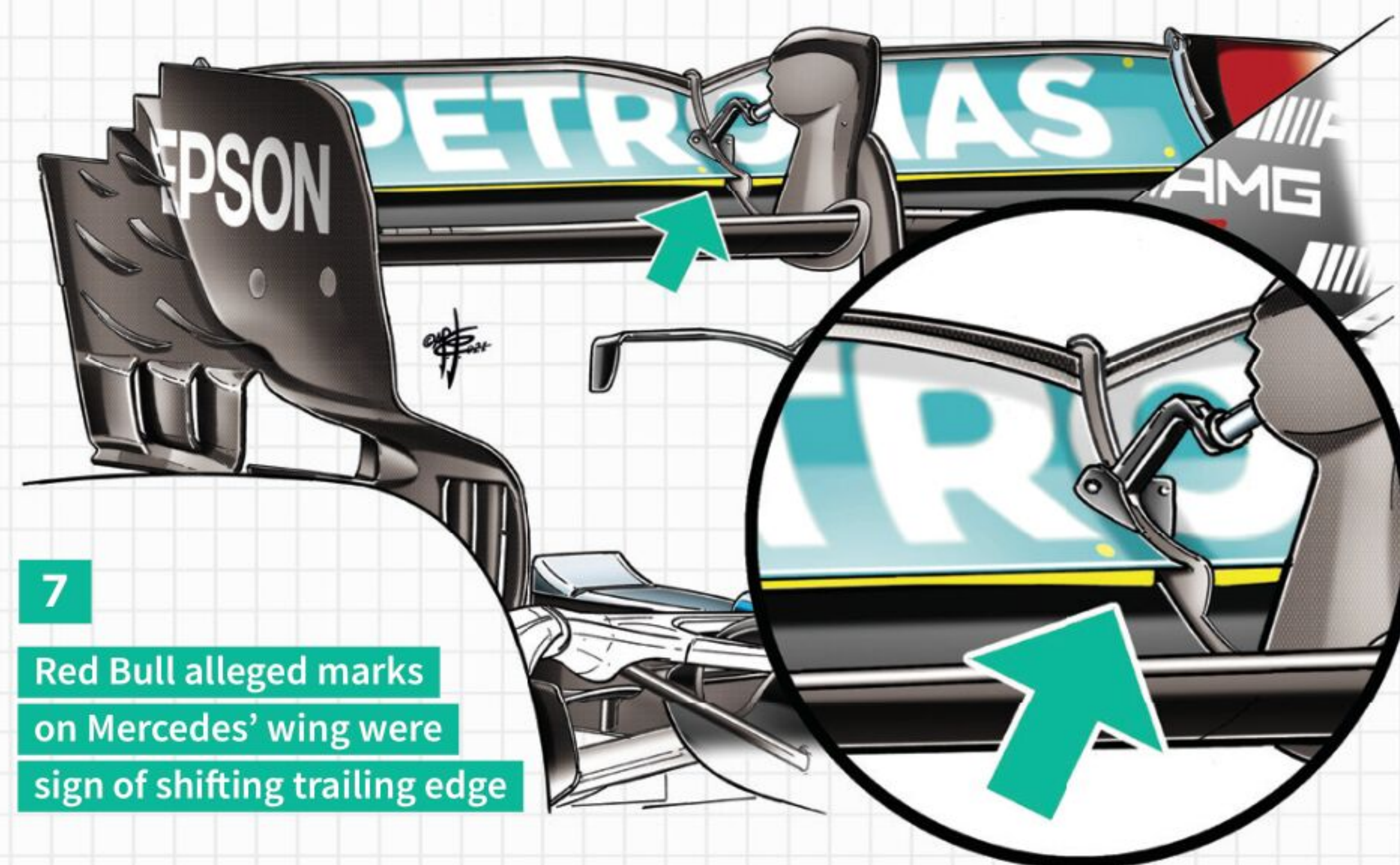
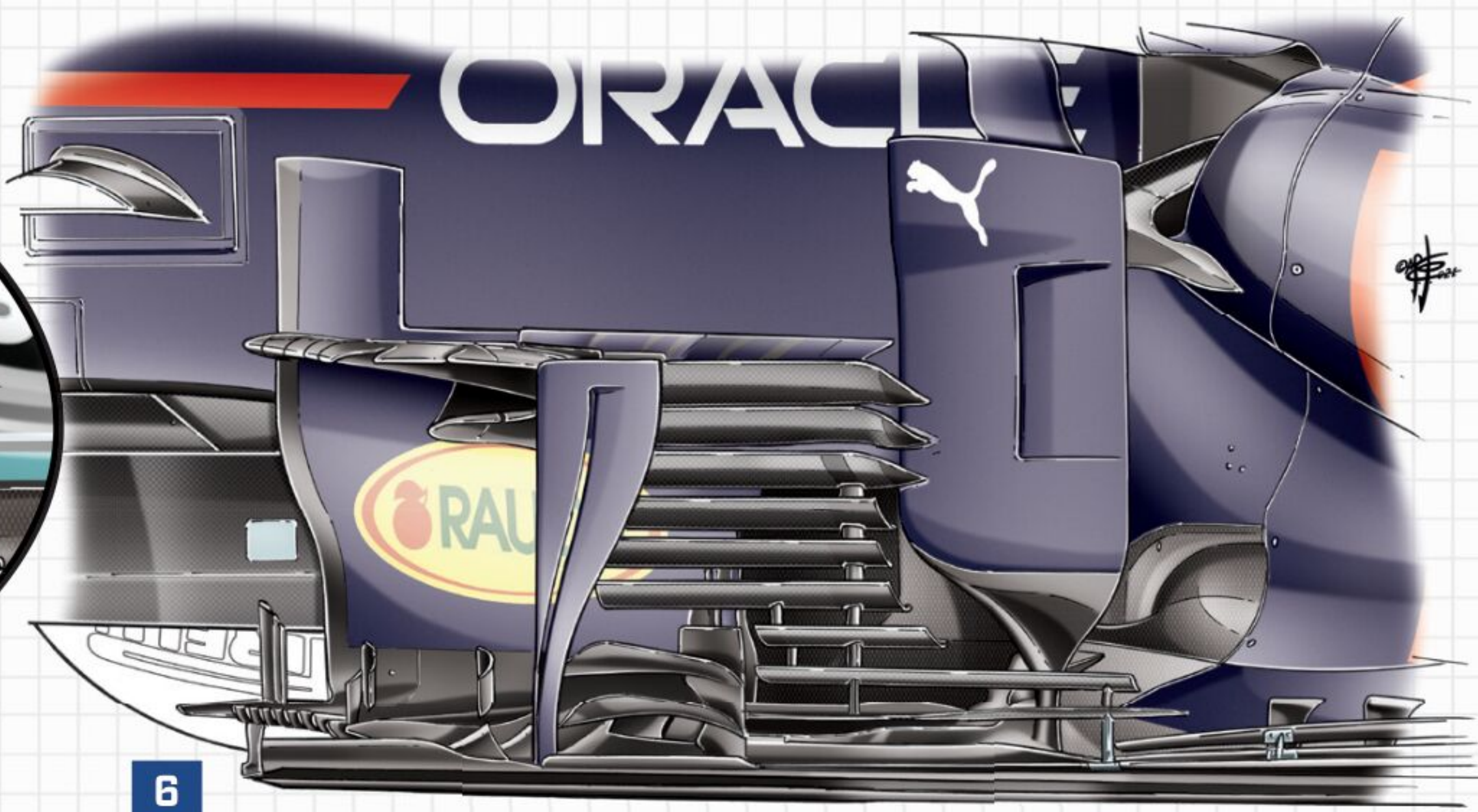
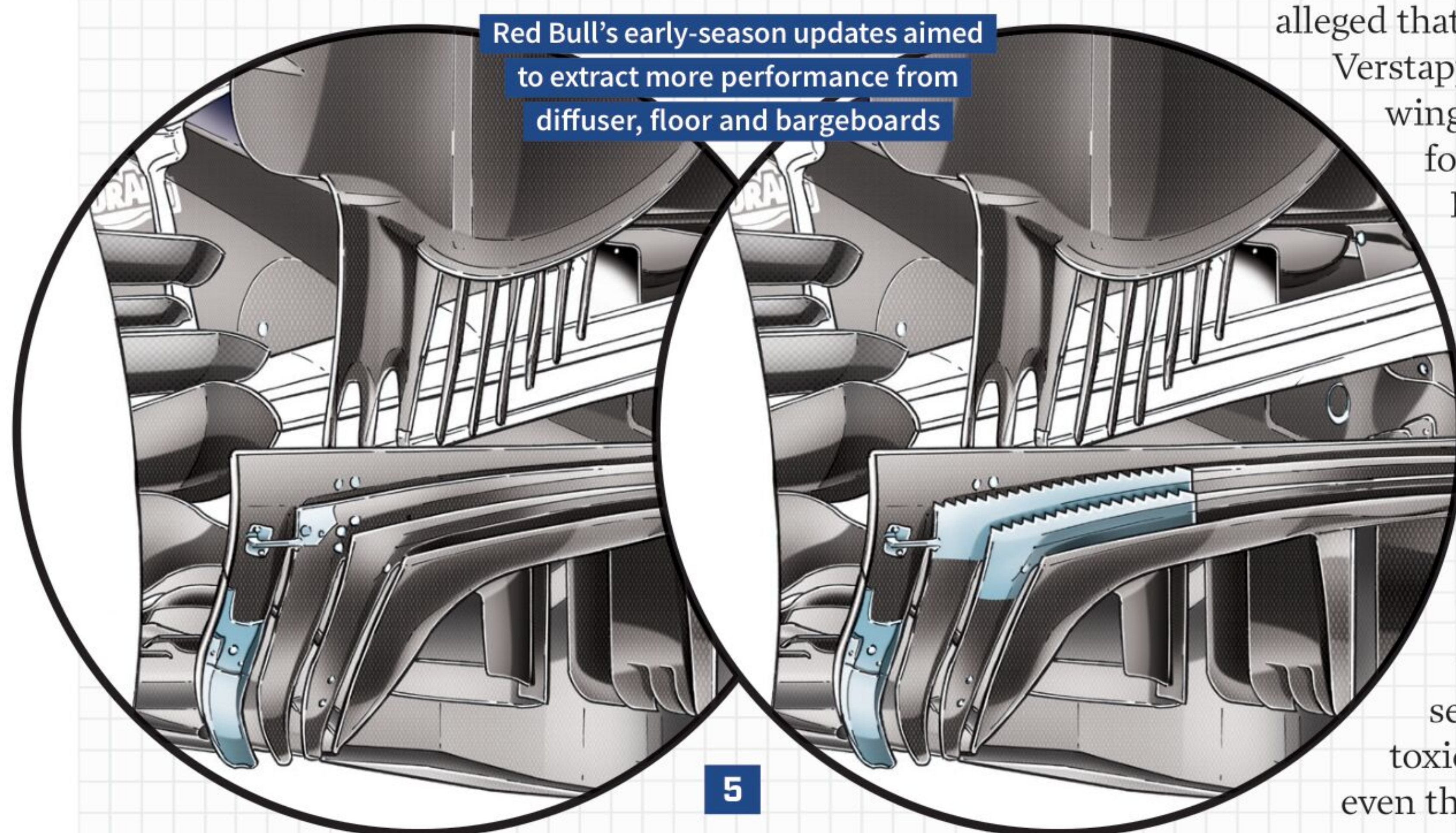


Mercedes introduced a new floor design for July's British Grand Prix that omitted the wave-shaped ridge to the part of the floor parallel to the sidepods [4]. Instead, the design was more in line with its rivals within the field as the floor developments began to converge. It also reworked the bargeboards, splitting the vertical and horizontal parts of the loop around the sidepod inlet, and extending that vertical part to the floor. Those changes seemed to be affecting the mid-corner downforce of the Mercedes, an area where it lacked compared to Red Bull in the opening half of the season.

Meanwhile Red Bull was, ahem, bullish with its own developments throughout the year, especially in the early season. It upped the ante for May's Portuguese GP weekend to keep pace with Mercedes in the championship battle. These focused on extracting more performance from the diffuser, floor and bargeboards to ladle in a few extra points of downforce and give Verstappen some more ammunition [5].

The side of the car looked increasingly like a set of Venetian blinds, as Red Bull's aerodynamicists saw fit to increase the quantity of the horizontal components attached to the sidepod-mounted collection of aero devices [6]. This was to pick up the airflow from the bargeboards and offer the car a little extra downforce, while also assisting with the two vertical elements sandwiching them to clean up the airflow directed at the sidepods.

But the most intriguing undercurrent of the Mercedes and Red Bull tech war was arguably fought in the stewards' room, particularly within their respective rear-wing designs. To counteract the drag of running with a larger rear-wing geometry, Red Bull delved into a time-tested method of clawing back extra speed on the straights by adding the ability for the wing to flex.

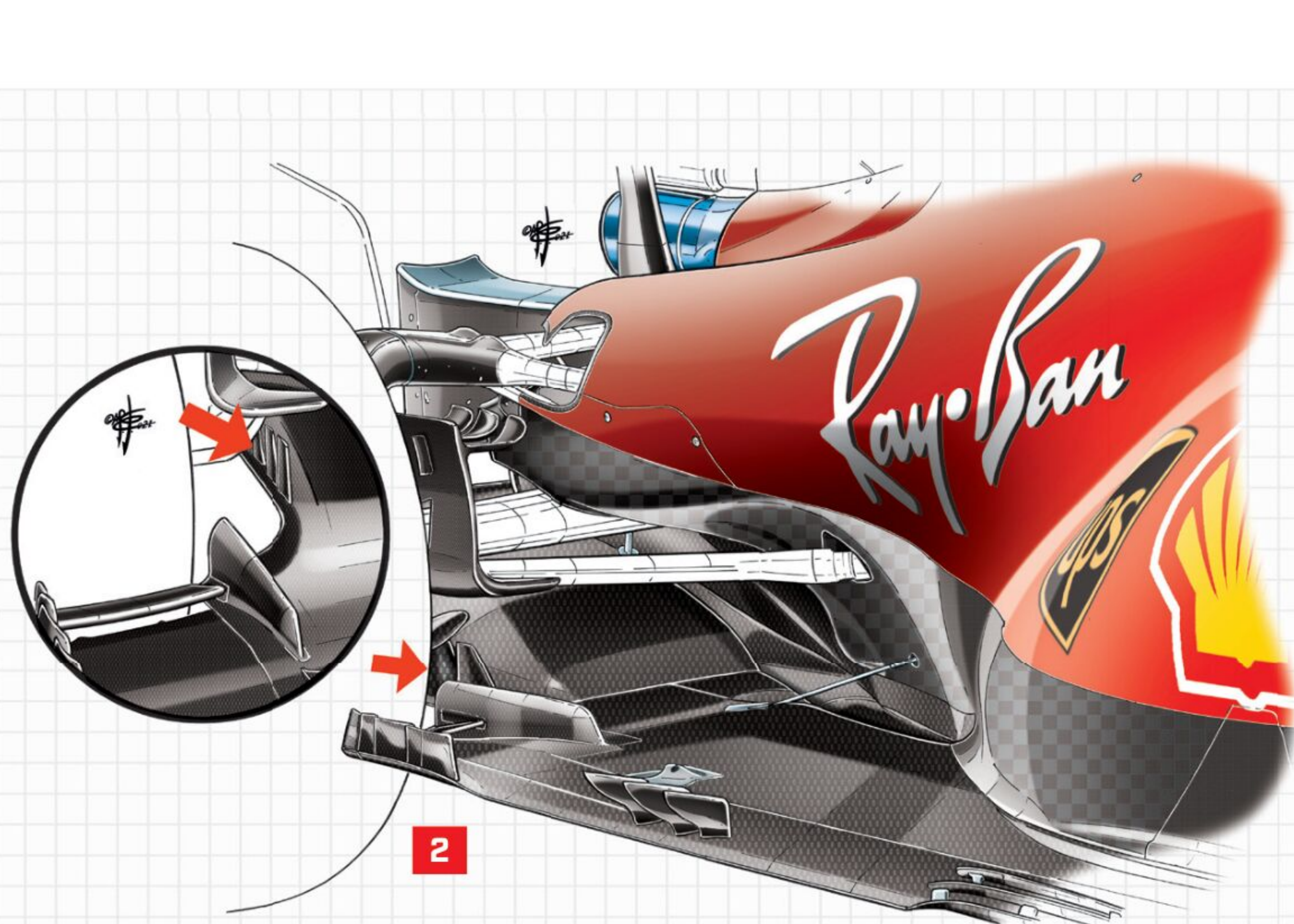


Every now and again, F1 teams find new ways to ensure their wings can flex to dump a bit of drag – at least, until another team picks up on it and either grasses them up to the FIA, or lets the cat out of the bag in a more public arena. Following qualifying at May's Spanish GP, Hamilton drew attention to Red Bull's "bendy wing" after spotting it tilt backwards along the straight, and thus the can of worms was opened.

Ferrari and Alfa Romeo also admitted to introducing aeroelasticity into their rear wings, leading the FIA to strengthen its flex tests to stamp it out ahead of the French GP in June. Mercedes, naturally, wanted the revised tests to be available as early as the race before in Baku, if only to stop Red Bull from gaining a further advantage on the long straight...

Despite those improved tests, flexi-wing controversy again reared its head at the Sao Paulo GP, where Red Bull alleged that Mercedes was indulging in the practice. Max Verstappen, caught playing with the Mercedes rear wing in parc ferme in Brazil, was fined €50,000 for fondling a rival's car, as Red Bull boss Christian Horner pointed to "score marks" on the Mercedes endplate that denoted a trailing edge that shifted back to reduce the drag on the straights [7].

Mercedes denied the allegations, although the FIA introduced a further check as a "fact-finding mission" to determine whether the Brackley squad was bending the rules. Red Bull considered the matter closed thereafter, having initially declared itself ready to protest Mercedes' design, but where the truth lies is unclear. In the context of the season, it was yet another example of off-track toxicity tarnishing the title fight on the road, and even the technical battle could not remain uncorrupted.



Ferrari vs McLaren

Close encounters of the third kind

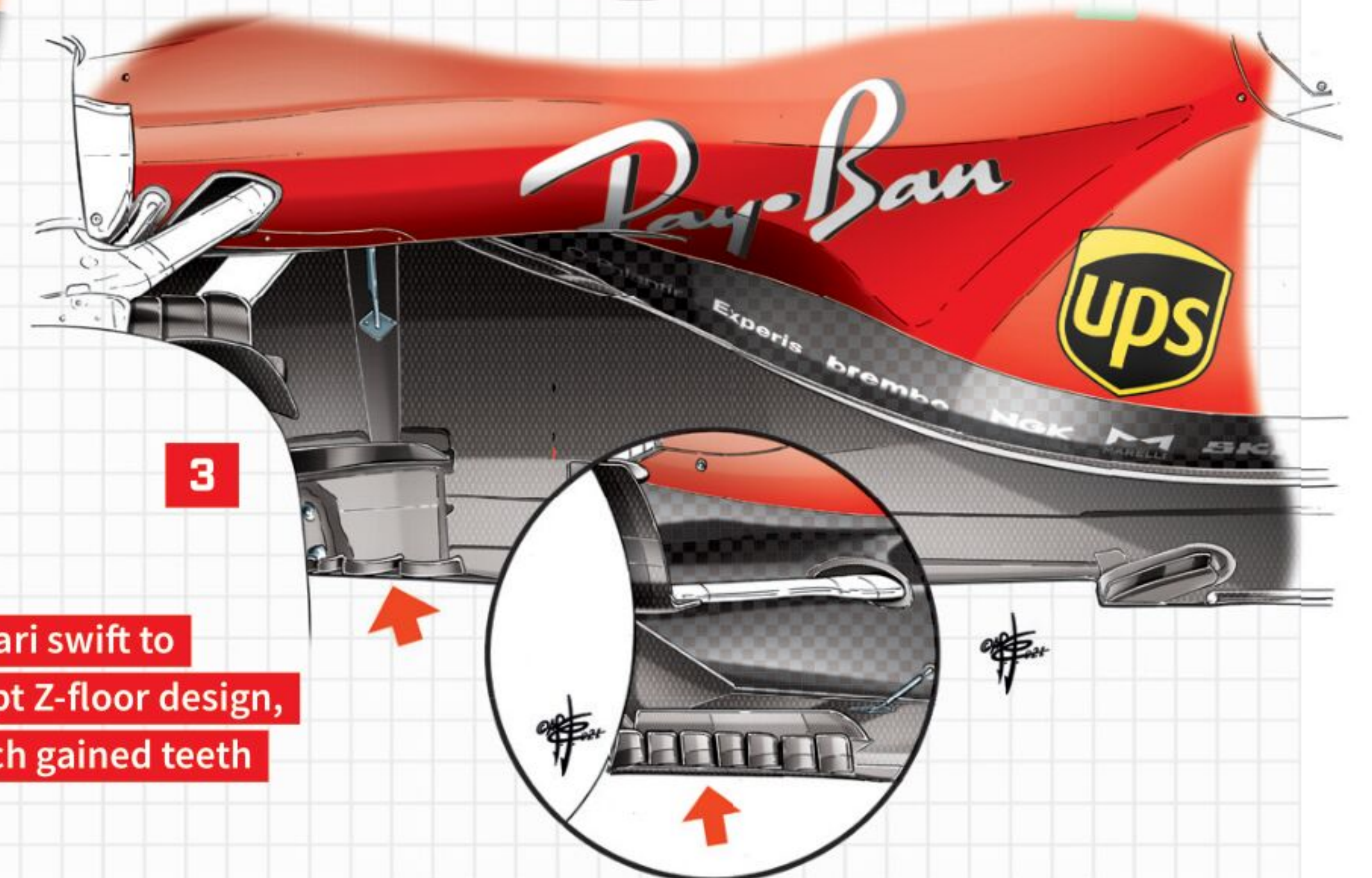
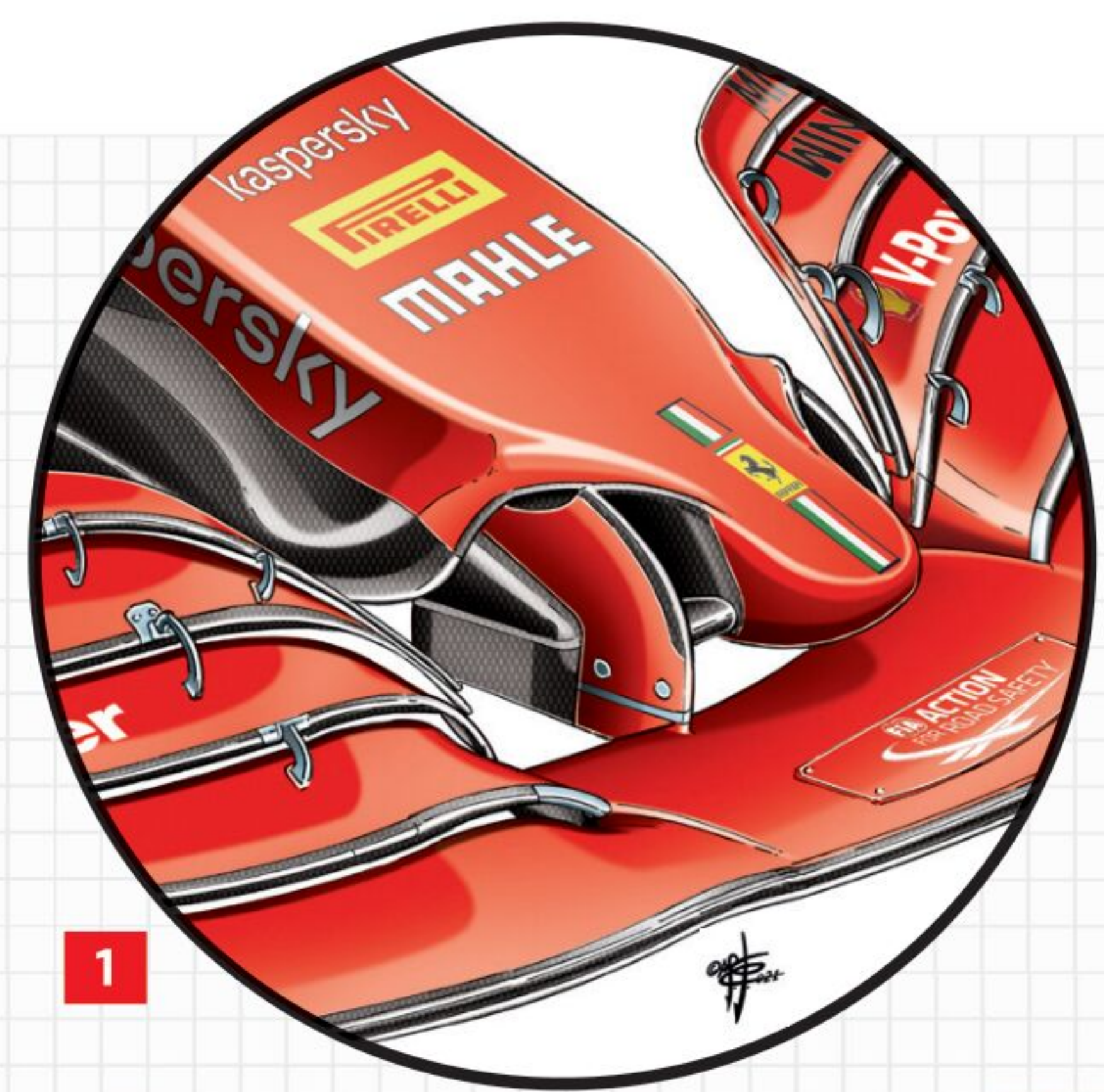
Two of the teams somewhat restricted by the token requirements, for very different reasons, spent the year embroiled in an excellent scrap over third place in the constructors' championship. McLaren, the incumbent 'best-of-the-rest' squad, had to enact a switch to the Mercedes power unit after bringing its Renault deal to an end, which required a redesign to its chassis to accept the new fixtures and fittings from the German manufacturer.

Ferrari, meanwhile, sunk its tokens into a new gearbox and suspension as it sought to overcome a miserable 2020 season. The fallout from the controversial powertrain arrangement it ran in 2019, during which it was alleged that the Italian team was circumventing the regulations on fuel-flow restrictions, meant that it was stuck with a higher-drag car for 2020 that had been designed to heap more downforce into a powerful package. With a neutered engine, Ferrari had to deal with the worst of both worlds.

Although it spent no tokens on changing the nose's crash structure, Ferrari did give its SF21 a facelift with a new front end [1] to open up the transit of air to the underside. It also experimented with different floor options at the start of the year, using a number of teeth at the corner ahead of the front tyre and alongside the top of the diffuser to recapture the downforce lost to the off-season regulatory changes. [2]

Ferrari made the switch to the Z-floor quite early, tested it during practice on one car at Imola in April, and had floors for both Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz Jr ready for the Portuguese GP as it sought to take on McLaren, which had staked its claim for third in the standings early on thanks to Lando Norris's impressive form. Ferrari's switch to the Z-floor design [3] gave the team the option to work the airflow earlier, sealing the floor with the additional exposed corner of the new design. Like the other Z-floors on the grid, it also featured a fin along the top, helping to strengthen and direct the position of the vortex produced.

Ferrari later added to the collection of teeth at the rear corner of the floor, reducing their chord length to



Ferrari swift to adopt Z-floor design, which gained teeth

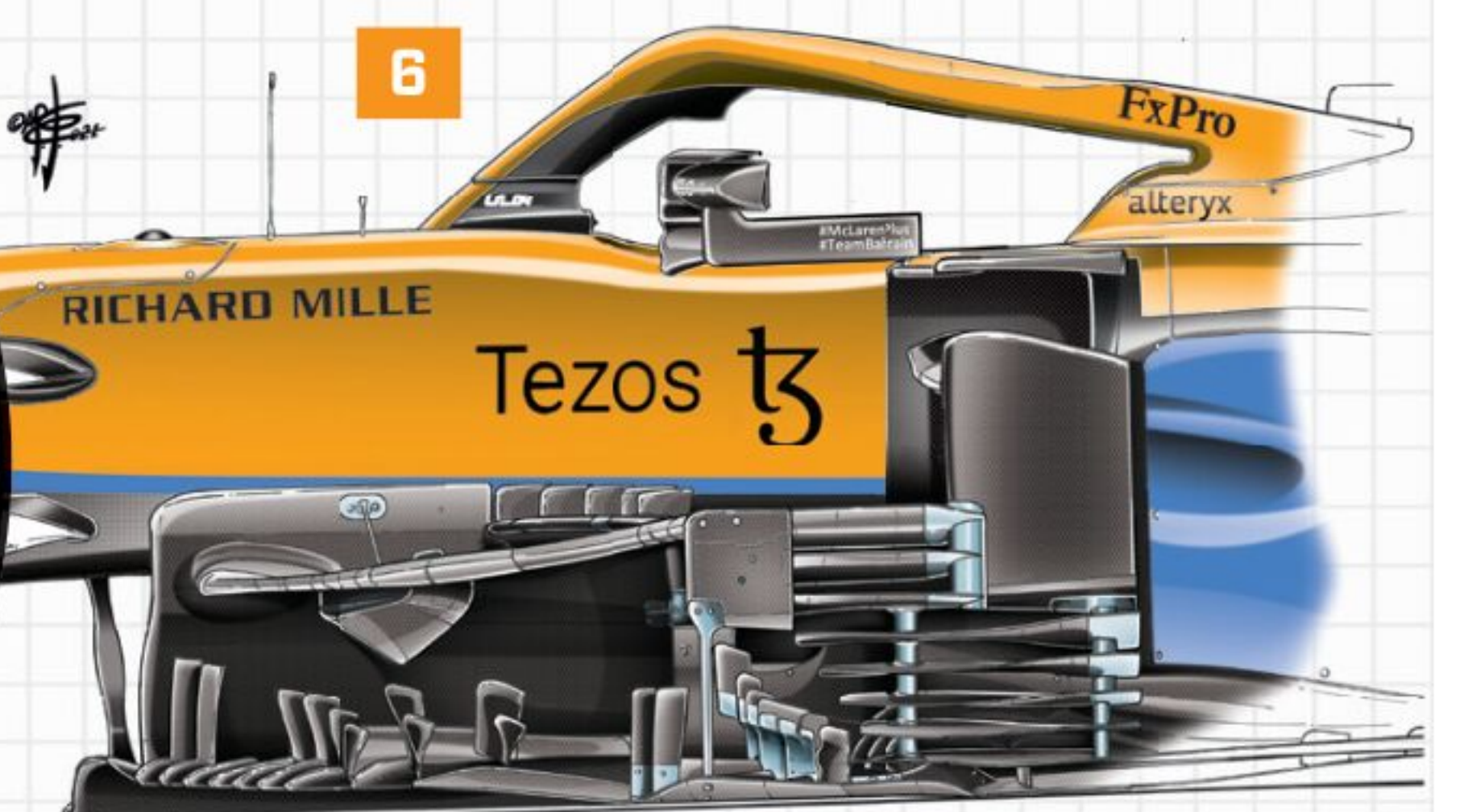
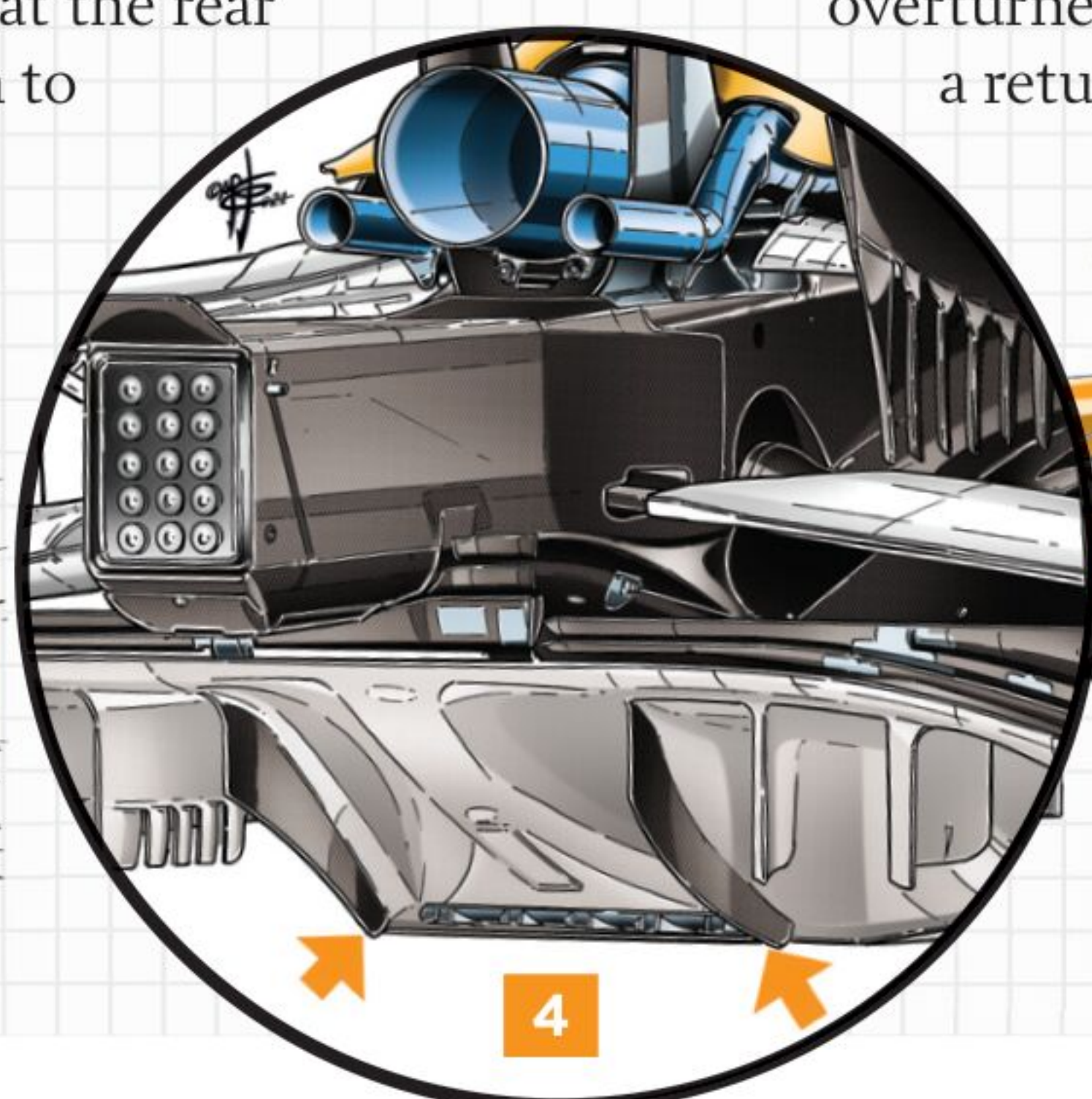
squeeze more in and strengthen their placement of airflow around the rear wheel.

McLaren, meanwhile, had found a workaround to the 2021 diffuser restrictions at the start of the year. The FIA had made the decision to trim the fences within the diffuser by 50mm to reduce its overall effectiveness, pairing that with the floor-size reduction to inhibit downforce. McLaren thus embedded the fences in the central part of the diffuser [4], dropping below the 50mm cut-off to find extra performance. Curiously, it remained an innovation that few copied.

The team developed its own Z-floor [5] to join its rivals, although many of its mid-season updates focused on working with the bargeboard package to cover off a hole in its performance. Although strong at the slow-speed and high-speed circuits, as evinced by its Monaco podium and Monza 1-2, McLaren endured greater variability at circuits with long medium-speed corners. It introduced a new set of bargeboards [6] for August's Hungarian GP, with the positioning of the main boomerang element revised for the new development. The leading edge was moved lower and further forward to pick up airflow from the front sooner to play with the elements further downstream.

Heading into the summer break, Ferrari and McLaren were level on 163 points but, despite McLaren's bright start on the return to action, Ferrari's greater consistency overturned the initial gap – rewarding it with a return to the top three. ►

McLaren's Z-floor (below), diffuser innovation (centre) and Hungary bargeboards (right)



Alpine and AlphaTauri

‘Team Enstone’ was furnished with another new identity, the Renault Group electing to remove its own name from above the factory doors and transpose it with that of Alpine. Now enrobed in a blue, white and red livery to accentuate the Frenchness of the team, the first appearance of the A521 F1 car drew immediate comparisons with that of another French icon – namely, the 1976 Ligier JS5.

The Alpine was nowhere near as lumbering as the bulbous Ligier, but their respective air intakes were notably larger than their counterparts on the grid. Alpine elected to shrink the sidepods and use more of the overhead intake for cooling, aiding the flow of air towards the back of the car to maximise the use of the restricted floor size.

Although Alpine secured victory in the Hungarian GP, courtesy of Esteban Ocon’s excellent defence from Sebastian Vettel, the team was dogged by consistency issues, but had just enough in hand to bat away AlphaTauri as the Italian team tried to secure its highest constructors’ placing in F1 in any of its guises.

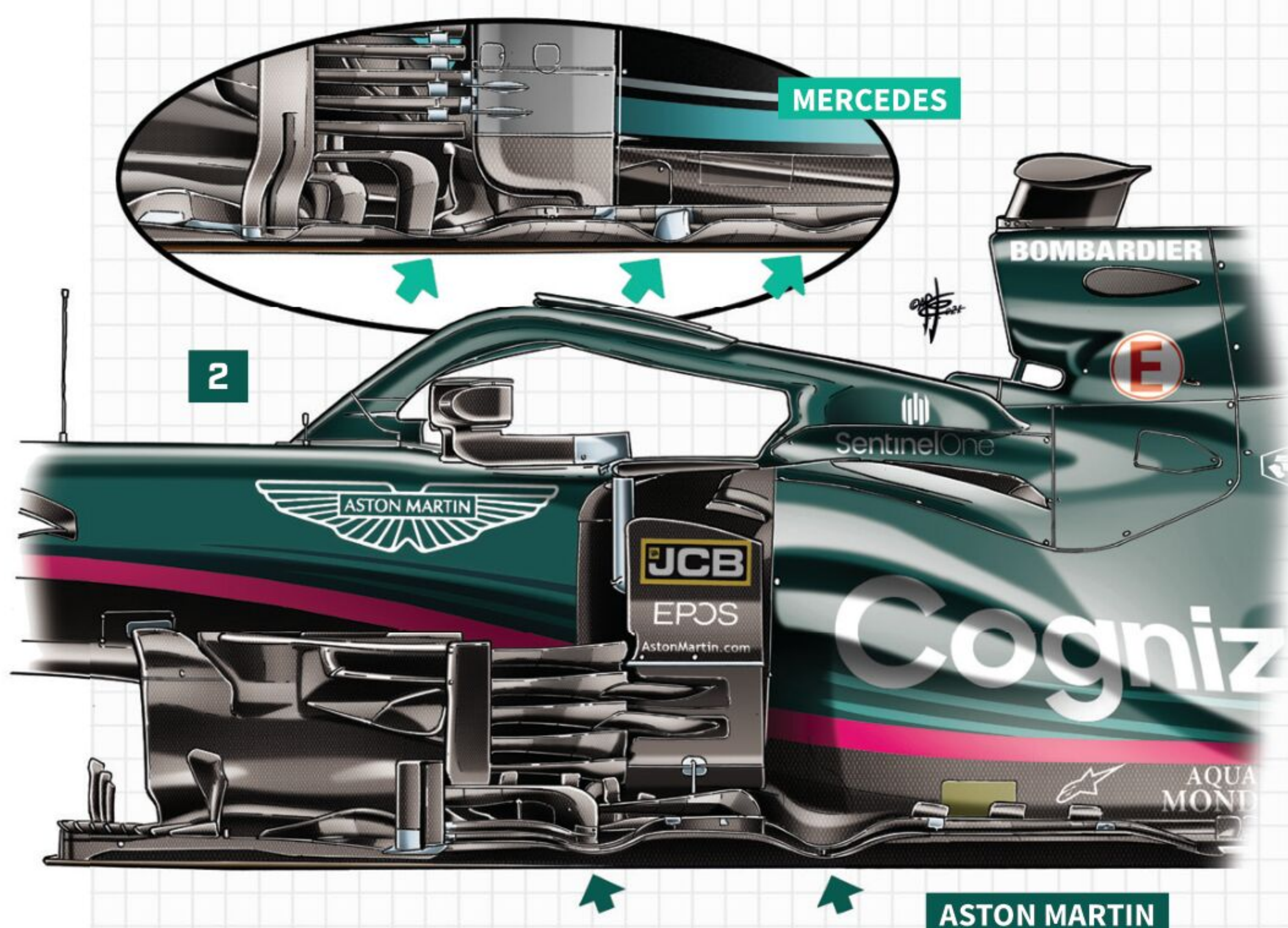
AlphaTauri elected to spend its 2021 tokens on a redesign for its nose, doing away with the thumb-tip crash structure for something altogether more elegant. It was also able to update some of its internals, namely suspension and steering geometry, to Red Bull’s 2020 designs without using up any tokens, giving it a proven set of components to work with in its own package.

It was also one of the first teams to unveil a Z-floor at its launch, instead choosing to hide the nose in its launch renders.

Although the AT02 proved potent, especially in the hands of Pierre Gasly, who frequently battled with the Ferraris and McLarens, it could not repeat the heroics of 2020, when Gasly sensationally picked up victory at Monza. Despite bringing a tailor-made front wing [1] to the Temple of Speed, the team’s race lasted a mere five laps when Yuki Tsunoda failed to start with a brake issue and Gasly’s car suffered from a hangover after his sprint-race crash.

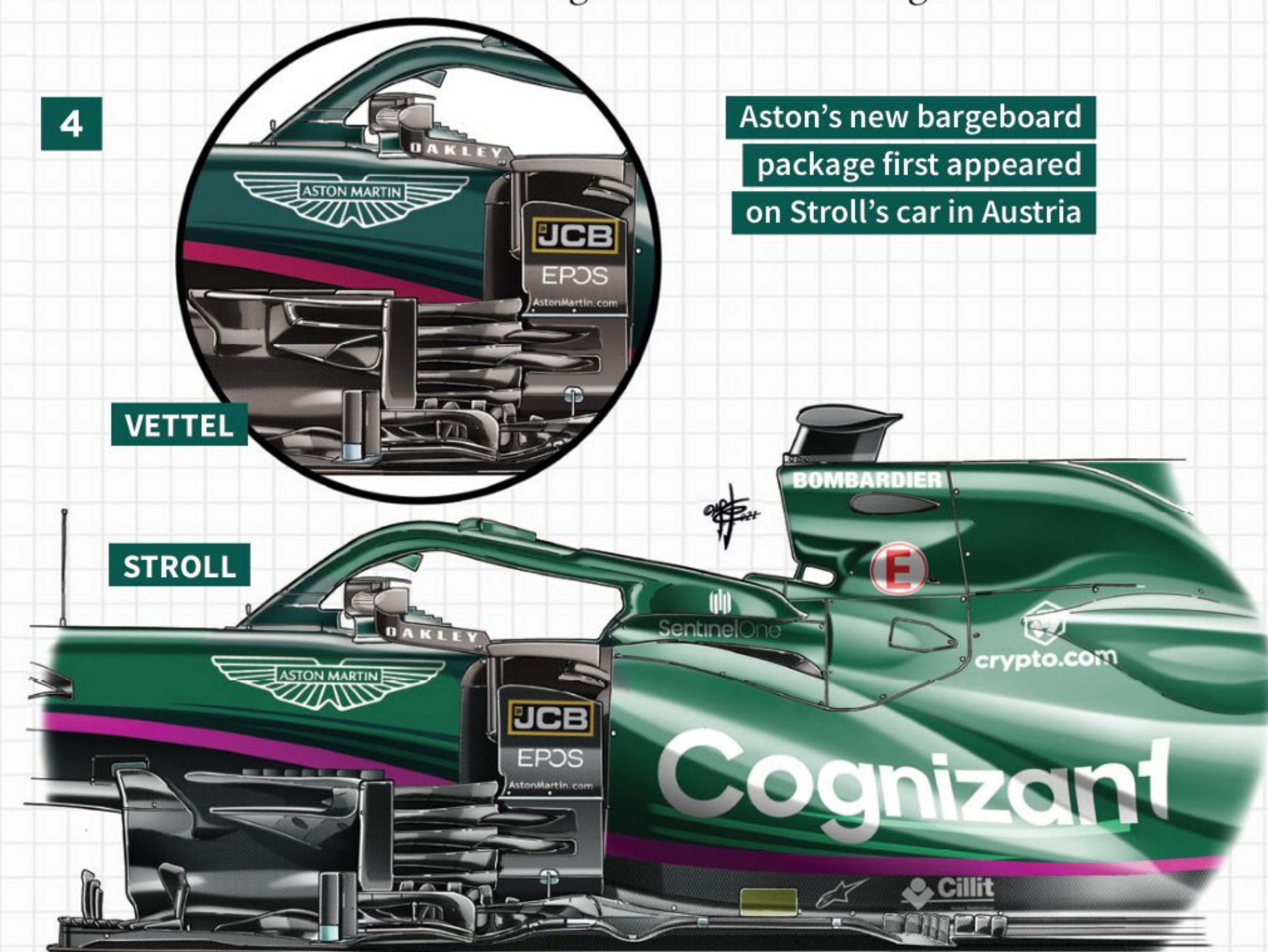
Aston Martin vanquished by early season disad-Vantage

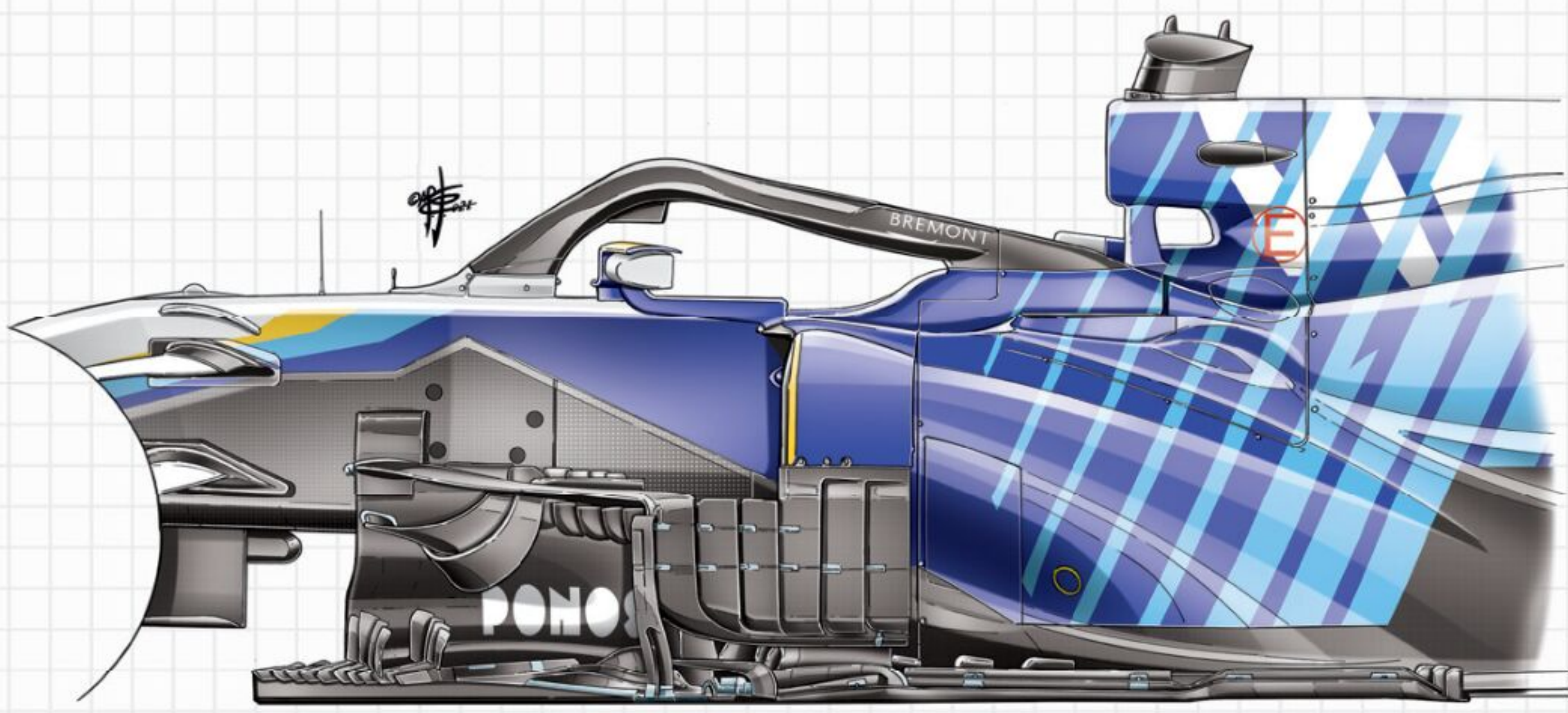
After Racing Point controversially borrowed a number of key design cues from Mercedes for the 2020 season, it elected to switch to the low-rake inclination to fall in line with its technology partner. Retaining that concept for the AMR21, newly submerged in a British Racing Green livery following the team’s metamorphosis into Aston Martin, the Silverstone squad hoped to pick up from Sergio Perez’s late-season victory at the Sakhir outer loop and move further to the front in 2021.



But, like Mercedes, Aston had its wings clipped by the change in floor regulations, and initially resorted to a similar tactic of introducing a rippled floor [2] to try to control airflow earlier and find more downforce during the mid-corner when the car is in yaw. After a difficult start to the year, in which the team was struggling to find its way into the top 10, Aston asked the FIA to relax its limits on the token system so that the team could recover.

When that wasn't granted, the team put pen to paper on a collection of new updates for round four at Barcelona [3]. It changed the shape of its sidepods, which now featured a more distinct slope down to the floor to guide air more cleanly around the rear of the car. It then brought a new floor, with revised ripples along the edge to improve the diffusion of air and introduce more suction underneath. The team had also been introducing different fin arrangements





5

on top of the floor to compensate for its off-season losses.

By the Austrian races in June/July, the team had also developed a new bargeboard package ahead of a final push to keep its car competitive, realigning the two boomerangs to mount to the bargeboard independently. These converged at the outer part before attaching to the outer elements, perhaps opting for greater flow control down the centre of the car [4].

Williams picks up the pieces of eighth

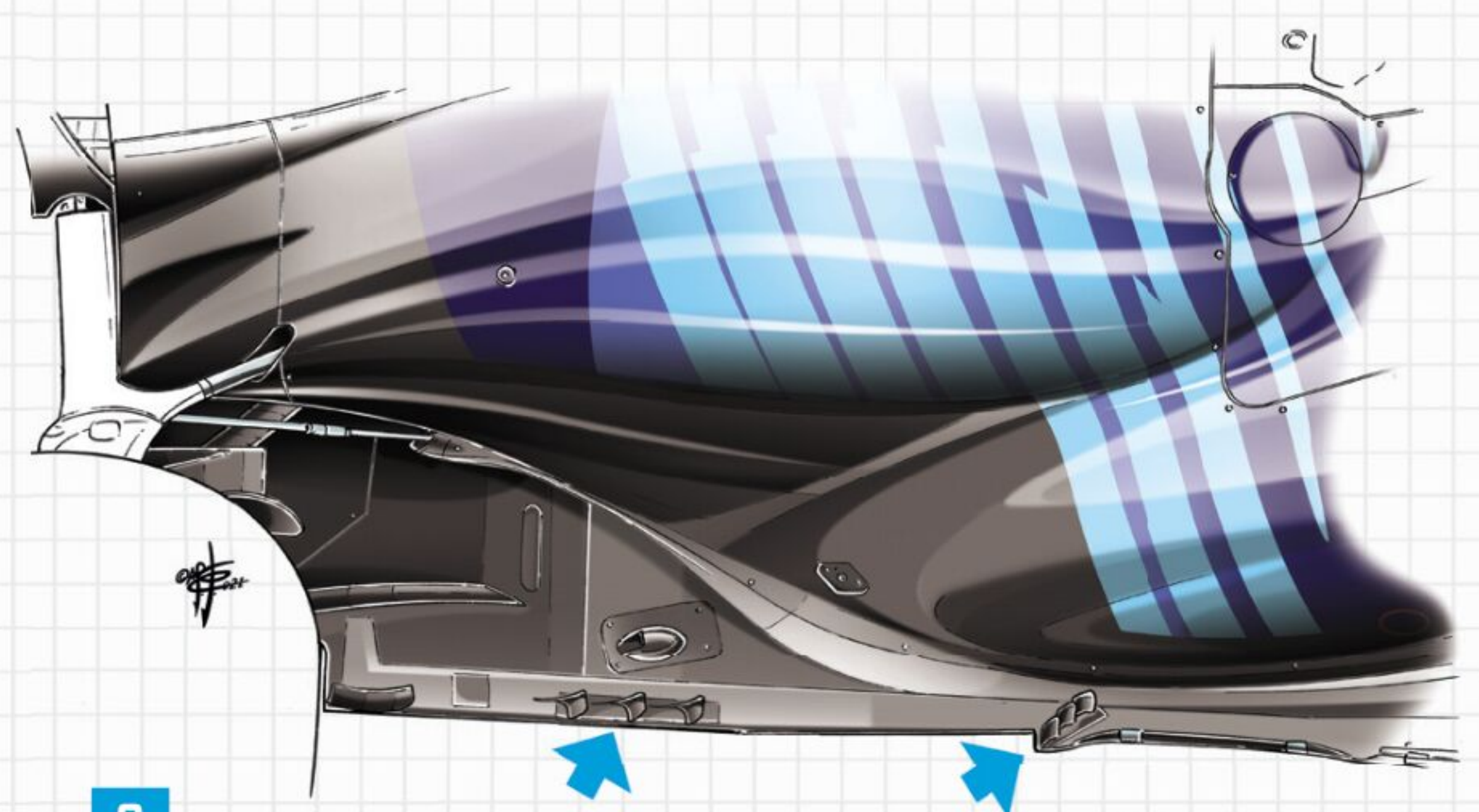
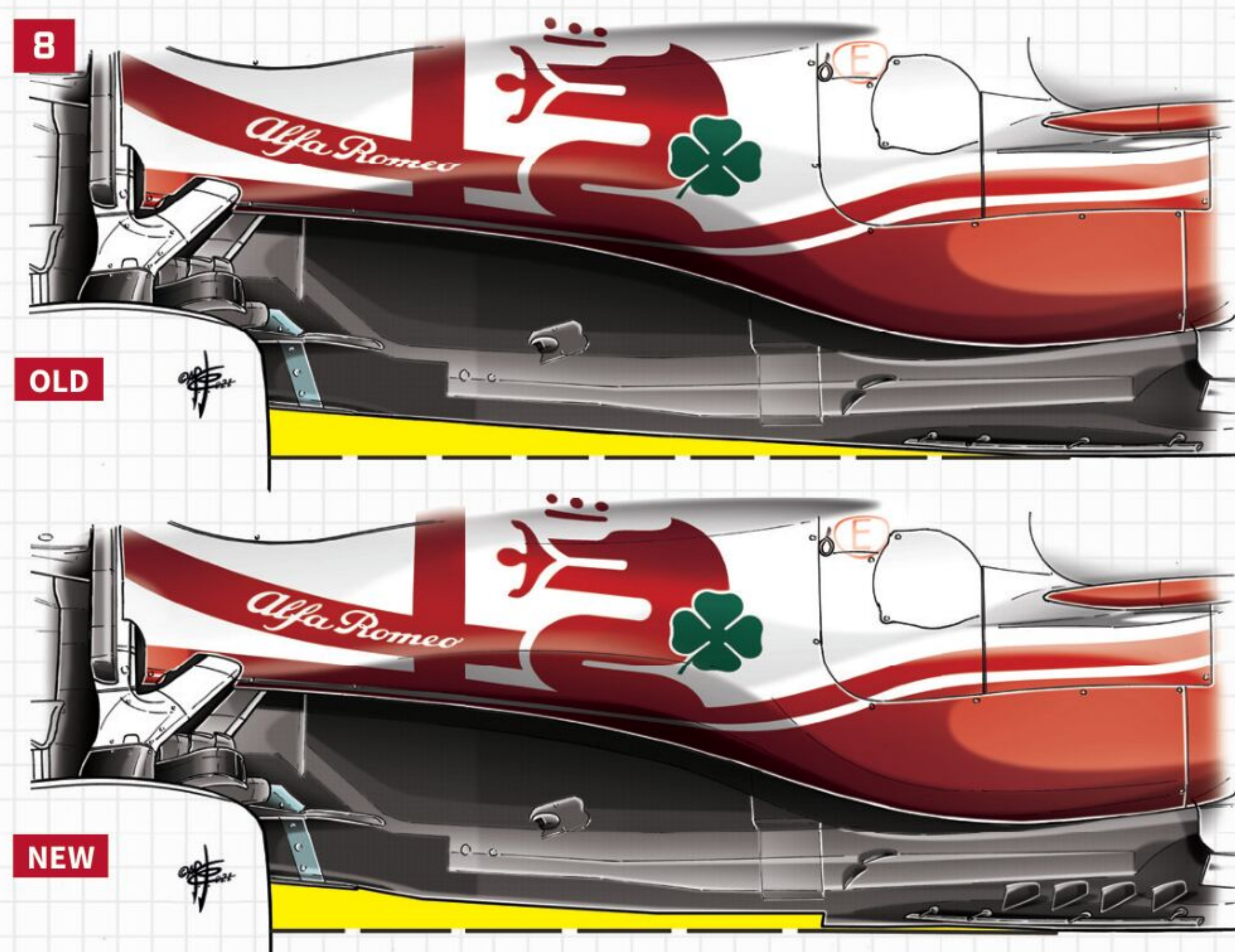
Locked into updating a car that scored zero points last season, Williams could be forgiven for knocking 2021 on the head and throwing its entire focus into next season. Instead, the team ended the season on an upward swing in form after giving the FW43 an overhaul and reaping the rewards [5].

Williams's FW43B was much more effective at producing downforce compared to its predecessors, albeit at a price: the car was somewhat trickier to drive in high-wind conditions. The team picked up on the Z-floor craze for round two at Imola, around the same time as Ferrari. It employed a trio of small fins on the edge of the added corner to strengthen its defence of the underbody airflow, and used multiple smaller fins to allow the flow to be turned outwards without detaching within a shorter space of time [6].

But unlike the past two seasons, Williams was able to make the most of the bigger chances that came its way, bagging a double-points finish in Hungary for the first time since the 2018 Italian GP, and assuming a podium finish in the washout 'race' at Spa. After hitting rock bottom in the previous two seasons, the team's new management will hope that 2021's heroics will provide the impetus for a rebirth in fortunes.

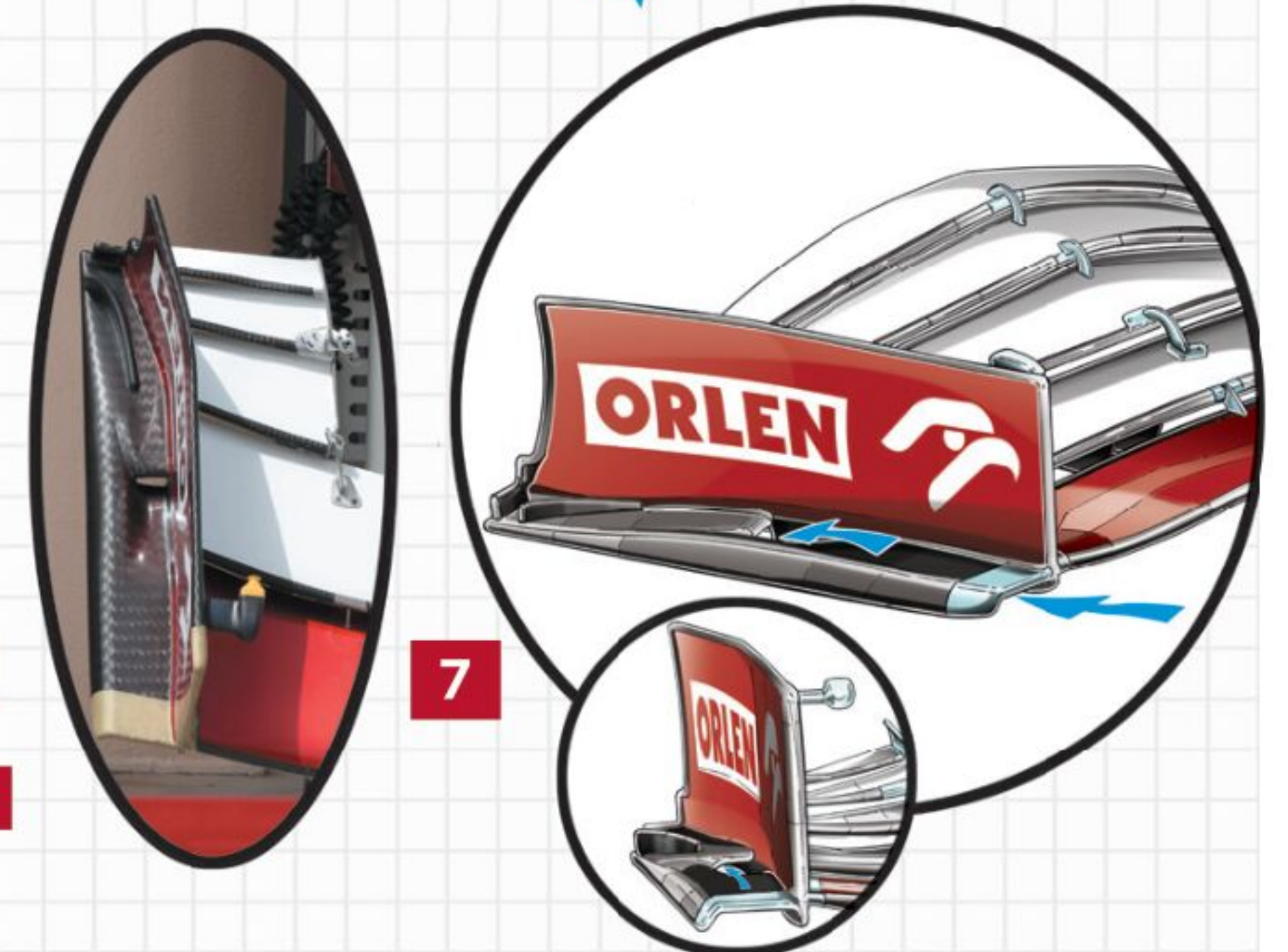
Wherefore art thou, Alfa Romeo?

Alfa Romeo effectively begins next season with a clean slate, especially as the past two seasons have been ones of toil, and the team switched



6

Early focus for Alfa included slotted front-wing endplate



7

its focus early to 2022, when it welcomes Valtteri Bottas and Guanyu Zhou into the fold.

One of Alfa's early focuses was on the front wing, introducing a slotted endplate to strengthen its control over the vortices produced by the footplate, bleeding off any airflow passing over the top to be directed outboard [7].

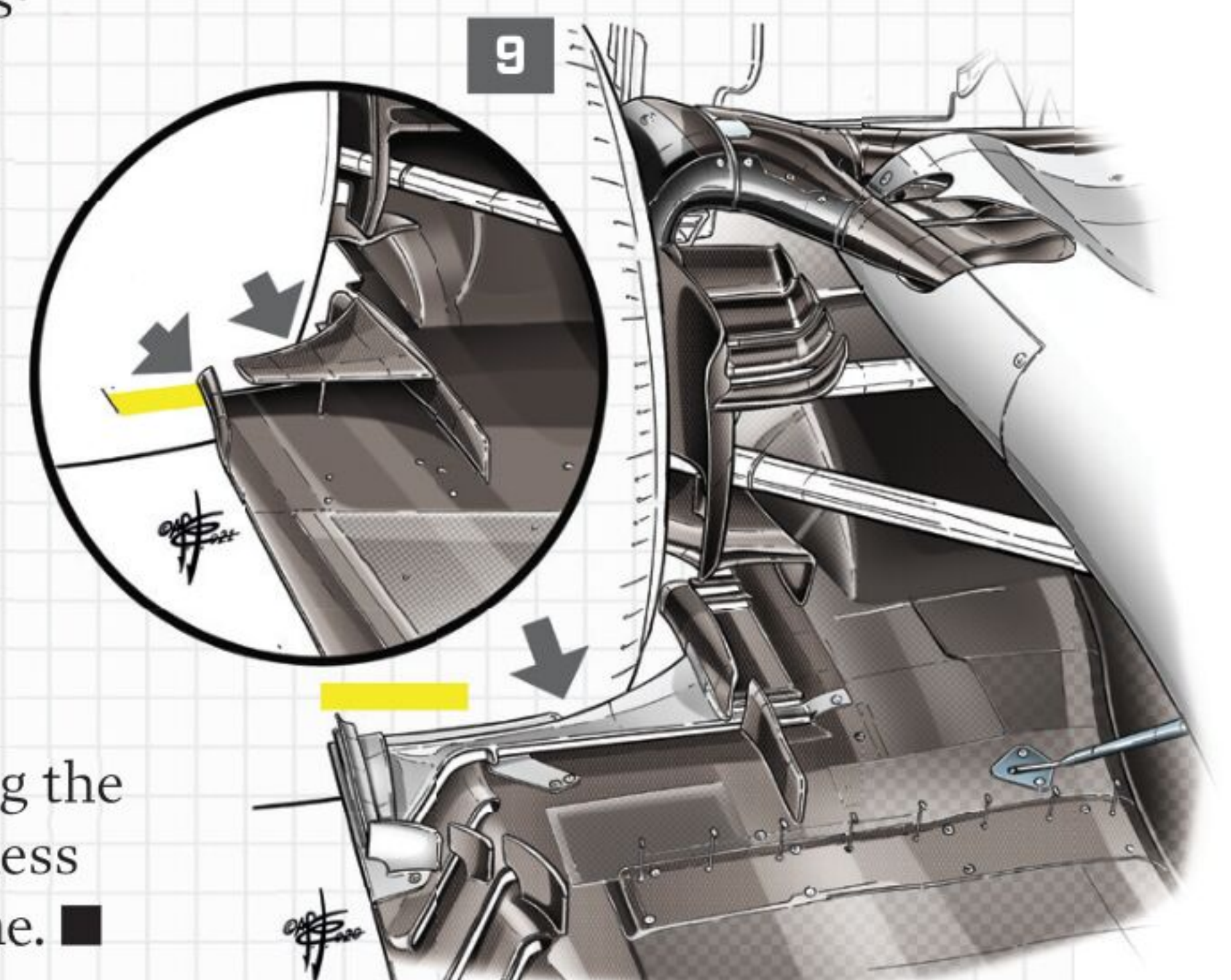
The team also bought into the Z-floor trend at May's Monaco GP, augmenting it with a quartet of fins further forward to exert more control over the airflow passing over the top of the floor [8]. Although Alfa managed to score more points than it managed in 2020, it dropped to ninth overall owing to the improved form of Williams in 2021, and thus will be hoping its early focus on the all-new aero regulations next year pays dividends.

Haas puts all its hopes on 2022

It's been a difficult few seasons for the Haas team. The Anglo-American squad has been unable to resist the pull of the wooden spoon at the back of the field and, given the issues that the team faced with its 2020 car, the team decided to merely update the VF-20 for the new floor rules and effectively leave the development there. The team spent none of its tokens, electing to throw all its eggs into the 2022 basket.

The floor it produced for the 2021 regulations was heavily based on the prototype designs that the team ran in practice sessions towards the end of the previous year [9].

But the lack of downforce that the VF-21 had relative to the other cars tethered new driving line-up Mick Schumacher and Nikita Mazepin to the back of the grid, leaving the team to record a pointless season for the first time. ■



9



FERRARI vs McLAREN

Rousing fight wakes up the sleeping giants

Ferrari beat McLaren to third in the points, and both former title-winning teams could look on 2021 as a year of positive steps back towards the front of the field

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**





SUTTON

Thirteen years on from Formula 1's previous last-lap decider, the teams involved back in 2008 could only watch this year's fight from afar. Ferrari and McLaren are under no illusions of how things have changed. Neither entered 2021 expecting to mount any sort of challenge to Mercedes and Red Bull at the front of the field, with the change in regulations for 2022 the earliest realistic point that could happen.

Yet both teams used 2021 to lay strong foundations for the future. Not only did both achieve important landmarks and make a step forward compared to last season, but they were engaged in a close, season-long fight that helped battle-harden them; a precursor, perhaps, to the title fights both hope to return to in the near future.

Ferrari was eager to bounce back from its worst campaign in 40 years. The engine issues at the heart of its poor 2020 form were resolved for this year, removing the team's greatest hindrance, while the arrival of Carlos Sainz Jr as Sebastian Vettel's replacement brought fresh energy to Maranello.

For McLaren, consolidating its position as 'best of the rest' was the goal after rising to third in 2020. Mercedes joined as its new



Ricciardo's win for McLaren at Monza was the team's first since 2012



Leclerc's second place at Silverstone came after he'd led most of the race



SUTTON

engine supplier, while the loss of Sainz was made up for by signing Daniel Ricciardo from Renault on a three-year contract.

Neither team could make wholesale changes to the cars given the majority freeze in the regulations and the two permitted development 'tokens'. McLaren spent both of its tokens to fit the Mercedes power unit, while Ferrari focused on the rear of its car for the SF21, a big area of weakness through 2020.

Ferrari was encouraged by the early signs from testing and in the opening races that it could be competitive once again. "We did get some confidence from early on that some of the most significant issues we had with last year's car were not as strong as they were on this year's car," says Ferrari sporting director Laurent Mekies. "It was not a one-bullet fix, but it was a step in the right direction, after which you improve your understanding and you do other steps, even if they are small."

It quickly set up a two-team fight for third in the constructors' championship as both enjoyed the kind of highs that were missing throughout 2020. There were podiums, poles, and, in McLaren's case, even a win. On the occasions when Red Bull and Mercedes did drop the ball (or see their drivers collide), it was usually Ferrari and McLaren that were there to pick up the pieces and to capitalise.

But even on outright pace, there were occasions when both could properly take the fight to the frontrunners. Ferrari found itself excelling on the high-downforce tracks, no more so than ►



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Lost chance:
Leclerc nailed pole
at Monaco but heavy
crash prevented him
starting race

in Monaco, where Charles Leclerc took pole position despite a heavy crash exiting Swimming Pool, the damage from which would ultimately prevent him from starting the race. He took pole again in Baku and, while he faded to fourth in the race, it proved, to the team's surprise, that the pace that could be unlocked.

In the end, Ferrari's closest shot at victory came at a track not expected to suit the SF21: Silverstone. The first-lap clash between Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton put Leclerc into a surprise lead, which he clung onto until three laps from the end when Hamilton – recovering from his penalty – battled past.

Leclerc still regards Monaco as being the bigger missed chance for Ferrari. "Monaco was very frustrating, because I couldn't start the race," he says. "On Silverstone, maybe it's a little bit less frustrating, because it was such a surprise to be fighting for the win at that point that we were actually all very happy that we could fight for the win until that late in the race. It showed that, even though we were in a very difficult moment, we've progressed as a team."

But McLaren was also looking like more of a force through the first half of the season, albeit reliant on one driver much of the time. Lando Norris became a regular fixture in the top five, scoring three podiums in the first half of the season, as well as almost snaring pole in Austria. As his more experienced team-mate struggled to get up to speed, he grew into a team-leader role.

Norris acknowledges that his performance against Ricciardo this year has been "very good" for his confidence: "There's always that question of when you go up against a driver like that, are you going to do well? Is he going to beat me in every single qualifying or race

“Norris was a regular in the top five with three podiums in the first half of the season”

of the season? Those thoughts go through your head a little bit. When none of that happens, then you feel like, 'OK, if I can do this against him, he could beat this guy when he was in the same car, then I must be in a decent place.' It makes you think of good things."

The lowest ebbs of Ricciardo's season came in Hungary when, after being caught up in the Turn 1 melee and left with a damaged car, he limped home in 11th, and when Norris lapped him in Monaco. It meant the Australian entered the summer break with less than half of his team-mate's points total, and in need of a reset.

"I was ready for the August break," Ricciardo reflects. "When it's not going your way, you feel like you're in a cycle. I remember flying back, and I felt at peace with having the time off and getting back to Europe. I felt like the break gave me what I needed. I truly did feel different getting into the car in Spa [after the break]. I felt light again. And the first half of the season was weighing on me, and I felt like I'd got rid of a lot of that."

It was a reset that put Ricciardo on the path to victory at Monza in September, ending McLaren's drought that dated back to 2012. It may be a race that will be remembered for Verstappen's car ►



Norris almost took pole in
Austria, and finished third



Ricciardo came back
stronger after the break
and won in Italy



Norris earned pole position in wet in Sochi, and nearly won race

“After almost nine years without a win, McLaren almost had two in 14 days”

ending up on top of Hamilton's in the gravel at the Rettifilo chicane, but, in truth, it was won on merit by Ricciardo. He'd been leading comfortably before the clash, which, while it did help McLaren score a team 1-2 (the only one of the season), it didn't change the winner.

It was a big statement for Ricciardo after such a rough start to the year, his frustration showing in his post-race radio message: “For anyone who thought I left, I never left. Just moved aside for a while.”

Ricciardo denies it was a pre-planned quote, and admits he hesitated to say it. “I didn't want it to be like Valtteri [Bottas], with ‘to whom it may concern,’” he says. “I didn't want it to be a sound clip, like ‘f*** everyone!’ But I definitely felt like there were a lot of people who had written me off.”

After almost nine years without a win, McLaren almost had two in 14 days, when Norris came within a few laps of victory in Sochi. A stunning wet-weather pole was followed by a controlled performance at the front, soaking up pressure from a closing Hamilton, before an incoming rain shower and an insistence on staying out on slicks backfired badly. It was a strategy miscue that



denied Norris a maiden win, but was a performance that only added to the acclaim he had won through 2021.

“We made the wrong decision, but I wouldn't say I regret anything that I did from my side,” says Norris. “I did what I thought was best at the time. If it didn't rain any more, I'm 99.99% sure I would have won the race.”

Sochi also marked a turning point in Ferrari's season. It had slipped to 17.5 points behind McLaren in the fight for third, but the arrival of its upgraded hybrid system — a concept focused on 2022 — offered a timely performance boost. “When they brought their power unit upgrade, that helped them,” says Norris. “I still believe we've done a better job as a team. I think there's been more races where they've been quicker, but just made more mistakes than us.”

SAINZ AND LECLERC ‘As good as it gets’ as F1 team-mates



By replacing Sebastian Vettel as Charles Leclerc's team-mate for 2021, Carlos Sainz Jr was thought by some to be taking up a ‘number two’ role at Ferrari. After all, Ferrari had signalled that Leclerc was the key to its future by handing him a long-term contract after his breakout 2019 campaign.

But Sainz's stock only continued to rise through his first year at Maranello as he not only beat Leclerc in the championship, but also helped form a potent on-track partnership and a new ‘bromance’ off-track with his team-mate.

“He's had an amazing year,” Leclerc says of Sainz. “He has obviously pushed me to try and perform better at every race. One of the strong points of Carlos is the race management and

tyre management and that's probably been my weakness in 2019. I progressed a lot as a driver in 2020, and again this year, and part of this year is thanks to Carlos.”

As Sainz adjusted to life at Ferrari, he grew in confidence, and was able to lean on Leclerc for help to tame the SF21. “The way that he was driving the Ferrari in a particular way to be as quick and as fast as he's been all year long, I've had to adapt myself,” Sainz points out. “Sometimes it was difficult to believe that it was possible to do that and it was so crazy quick that it was actually a bit shocking. But little by little adapting, and trying to learn from him, I managed to get to a good level.”

The final race in Abu Dhabi was



There is truth in that. Operationally, Ferrari knew it had to improve, as it was far from perfect last season, particularly when it came to pitstops. Mekies looked at the data and found that between 50-60% of Ferrari's pitstops were under three seconds in 2020. That figure increased to 75-80% in 2021.

"When I arrived at the team, I really felt like we had to make progress in the way that we execute the race in strategy and tyre management," Sainz says. "The first races were very difficult like that. I really felt strong progress throughout the season on that. The car performed maybe a bit better, but not more than a tenth better than at the beginning of the season. But you see how consistent we



McLaren's Seidl: fourth in standings "fair reflection"

were on race execution. It's another story compared to a beginning."

That progress combined with the upgraded hybrid system set Ferrari up to finish the year strongly, ultimately 48.5 points clear of McLaren to win the fight for third. But neither team was under any illusions of that being a momentous achievement. Both have far bigger fish to fry as they plot a return to the very front of the pack.

"We didn't set the third position as the final objective for ourselves," says Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto. "Finishing third, it's encouraging because it's a declaration that the team somehow has made progress and is going in the right direction. So I think it is giving us some serenity as well through the winter time, which is important because of what we are facing for 2022, which is a completely new challenge."

McLaren boss Andreas Seidl admits losing third was "painful" for McLaren, given it had spent so much of the season ahead of Ferrari in the standings. But he accepted that fourth was a "fair reflection" of the team's season and comparative pace against Ferrari.

"The most important thing is that we made steps forward again," he says. "Just look at our own progression, the points [up from 202 to 275], that's very positive. These are the steps I want to see and I have to see within the team, because it just confirms we are going in the right direction for next year, but I don't expect big changes in the pecking order. We still have to grow and improve and, at the same time, we'll try to shortcut that journey."

Red Bull and Mercedes aren't underestimating the threat from behind for next year. Red Bull boss Christian Horner joked in Abu Dhabi that Ferrari could "turn up with the fastest car and smash us out of the park" next year, while Mercedes' Toto Wolff believed there were "a few teams" that could "do really well" under the new regulations and pose a threat to the current dominant duo.

That was why the fight for third was McLaren's and Ferrari's own championship fight this year. Vying to only be 'best of the rest' won't have truly satisfied either team, given the people working there and their rich histories of success. But the progress made and the achievements of all four drivers through 2021 may well be important steps towards the success both crave. ■

"I think, as I often said, we've got the best driver line-up in Formula 1"

proof of how far Sainz had come. Ferrari ran a foot-perfect, clean race to grab a fourth podium of the season amid the late chaos, giving Sainz fifth in the drivers' standings ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and Leclerc, the Monegasque ending the season just 5.5 points off his team-mate. Sainz felt the performance at Yas Marina was a result of "everything I've learned through the year, the way that I've progressed with a team in executing a good race".

"When we signed Carlos, the



Leclerc and Sainz pushed each other all year

objective was to have two good drivers that were good racers, consistent and capable of scoring points for the team – I think it's what we got this season," says team boss Mattia Binotto. "I'm very proud of both of them. I think, as I often said, we've got the best line-up in Formula 1."

The arrival of Sainz has also aided

the atmosphere at Maranello, particularly after the occasional friction between Vettel and Leclerc. The team has even named Charles and Carlos 'C2' for its social media channels, and they've spent large parts of this year off-track playing chess against each other. "We got quite crazy with it in the first part of

the year," says Leclerc.

But it goes beyond friendship. Laurent Mekies says Ferrari's driver pairing is "as good as it gets" both technically and in terms of a working relationship: "It's deeper than being friends. The level of respect and desire to work together, and trust in both as a character and their technical abilities is huge. They both share the same drive to push the team to recover."

Much as for Ferrari, simply fighting at the head of the midfield and snaring the occasional podium won't be enough for Leclerc and Sainz. Both put in performances this year proving their star quality, going a long way to support Binotto's claim that Ferrari has the best line-up on the grid.



Year three of Norris's F1 career has seen a significant "next step" as his experience grows

McLAREN

Norris comes of age

Already a rising star, Lando Norris stepped up another gear in 2021 to become one of Formula 1's leading drivers

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

 PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

“You must do very well in your first year. But the level of delivering at 100% in every single race, this comes a bit later. You have the best examples with drivers that have been spending more than two, three years with the same team.”

That's how Carlos Sainz Jr views a driver's progression timeframe at a new Formula 1 team.

He should know. After all, he's raced for nearly half of the current grid. But he also knows one of the three drivers who made their F1 debuts in 2019, and this year entered the key year-three test he outlines very well: Lando Norris.

The pair's friendship has endured Sainz departing McLaren for Ferrari at the end of last year. The Spaniard has gone on to show excellence against superstar-in-waiting Charles Leclerc, while Norris made a new pairing with proven F1 race winner Daniel Ricciardo. And the young Briton was one of the stories of the season. But does he agree with his friend's assessment – that he should have made big progress in 2021 in any case?

“Yes, I would say so,” replies Norris. “I think my second year was good. Carlos, I believe, is one of the best drivers in F1. It also didn't make me look as good because he's an extremely good driver and he did a very good job – fair play to him. I think I got shadowed a bit by him because he was doing an exceptional job and I think this year I've taken that next step, which would have been the same or maybe a bit better than him.”

“And that was through a combination of understanding everything from the past few years, having a bit of a fresh start, different team-mate and so on. Having a slightly better car underneath me that I'm more confident with. And that winter off, coming back refreshed and having a lot more of that experience ingrained in me, this year I really saw that difference more than I did maybe for year one to year two.”

Norris's season got off to a very strong start. After being best of the rest in the Bahrain opener, at Imola he really showed his class and development surge. Only a fractional slip beyond track limits in qualifying cost him a front row and possible pole shot, then in



Former team-mate
Sainz remains a friend

“He was a massive thorn in the side of Red Bull and Mercedes in both Austrian races”

the race he surged up the order in the wet first half, was waved ahead of Ricciardo, and went on to nearly defy Lewis Hamilton for second place. A further podium visit came his way in Monaco, while Ricciardo was lapped. Then he was a massive thorn in the side of Red Bull and Mercedes in both Austrian races, earning Hamilton's praise after their first battle in the second race at the Red Bull Ring.

Norris's fury over a highly contentious penalty for a clash with Sergio Perez earlier in that race, which cost him a shot at beating Valtteri Bottas to second, said much about his attitude – despite his third place equalling his best F1 result to date. His strong form continued before and after the summer break, with fourth on home soil at Silverstone and searing pace in the wet at Spa, before he failed to catch an oversteer snap and crashed in Q3, costing him another glittering result in the washout farce that followed.

He dutifully played the team game at Monza to take what's now his best F1 result (second) behind the resurgent Ricciardo. But he might have been the lead McLaren on its 2021 day of days – he'd been faster in qualifying, but ended up behind his team-mate because Hamilton's defence after making a poor start meant there was space for the Australian to surge ahead and follow Max Verstappen.

Then came September's Russian GP. Norris, Sainz and George Russell starred in qualifying as they nailed the timing of the switch to slicks and got them up to temperature well, while Mercedes and Hamilton dithered and then lost time after hitting the pitlane wall. Sainz beat his former team-mate into the lead at Turn 2, but Norris harried him thereafter, then surged ahead as he got through the graining phase on the medium tyres, while the Ferrari had to pit. ►



Norris lapped his
team-mate en route to
third place in Monaco



“I think in 20 years if someone goes ‘remember Sochi?’ I’ll always remember it”

Hamilton came back at him towards the end of the second stint and may have been mounting a late attack, but then the rain arrived and it all went wrong for Norris and right for the older Briton.

“I’m very happy relative to my last two seasons,” says Norris, reflecting on 2021 overall. “The first half was especially very strong. We came out of the start extremely strong and I think we maximised what we did very well, [taking] every opportunity we had to get onto the podiums.”

The strong results tailed off towards the end, with Ferrari – McLaren’s rival for third in the constructors’ – also performing much better through this stage with its significantly upgraded hybrid system. There were errors, such as moving over on Sainz at the start in Brazil, which Norris calls “one of my biggest mistakes of the season”, but there was misfortune too: his punctures in Qatar and Abu Dhabi. Norris views it more as coincidence than a trend that a similar drop-off happened in 2019 and 2020.

“There’s a combination of two things,” he explains. “One, I have made maybe a couple of more minor mistakes later in the season. And as a car and team, we’ve also just not been as strong. I want to believe that Ferrari in general have been better than us throughout this year. There were two pole positions [for Ferrari] so I think they’ve had a better car throughout the whole year than we have. But we did better especially in that first half with that consistency, maximising opportunities.”

Norris highlights improved race performance as a key target he hit in 2021, as he got better at “choosing when to take risks and when to not” and generally managed the multi-tasking on tyre management, fuel saving, overtaking and strategy calls over a GP distance to be “a lot more competitive [on Sundays] than I was last year”.



But adaptability when McLaren can’t get its package into a “really small window to really nail everything” on set-up and handling is a key area Norris has identified for being even better in 2022. One of the biggest difficulties with the MCL35M was often instability on corner entry and having to grapple with understeer as the balance was off, something that really hampered Ricciardo (see panel). Norris found that when this was particularly bad – often following events where McLaren had ended up in a strong position on car balance – he was overthinking his approach. “When it’s a bit trickier,” he says, “I don’t feel like I can be as natural and drive as quickly as I want.”

Both McLaren and Norris have also vowed to be better in the event of another Sochi scenario – should one arrive again, with as much glory on the line when a weather change rolls in. Norris was criticised by some for his shouted reactions to suggestions of changing tyres, but the problem, McLaren later reflected, was the process in making the critical call to pit and take intermediates. The team, unsure of how intense the rain was going to get, asked Norris for his input and got a snappy reply. But he didn’t know his squad couldn’t predict the rain getting as bad as it did, which combined to result in his spectacular and heartbreaking fall to seventh. Other drivers benefited from being ordered to pit or getting clear information on their rivals (as was the case with Hamilton).

“It’s still painful,” Norris reflects on his victory near-miss. “I’ve moved on from it for sure. The fact it was a question, they didn’t know the rain was going to be getting a lot worse and didn’t communicate that to me has made it a bit easier to deal with. But we’re still in it together and it was still our decision as a team, and it was still a win that we lost together. It was a difficult thing because it was my first potential win in F1, so I think even in 20 years if someone goes ‘remember Sochi?’ I’ll always remember it. Because yeah, it was a tough weekend.”

But the fact that Norris was in that position to begin with speaks to his enduring success in 2021. He stepped up and led McLaren when it needed him to, able to present the team’s previous view when Ricciardo was relating his experience from Renault and Red Bull. Three years in he’s an established McLaren star and, after a season like the one just gone, his class is clear for the rest of F1 to see. ■



Key focus is to improve his adaptability when the car is not quite in the set-up sweet spot

Ricciardo's tricky McLaren challenge

Daniel Ricciardo made history for McLaren in 2021, when he led what would be the only 1-2 result of the season for any team.

That capped a very challenging year for the 32-year-old, who had arrived at McLaren for his second new start in three calendar years since leaving Red Bull at the end of 2018. He was expected to lead the squad given his pedigree and previous experience, but was left



trailing by Lando Norris – sometimes even humbled by the gulf between them, such as in Monaco, where Ricciardo was lapped.

His main problem was adjusting his late-braking style to keeping the MCL35M happy at corner entry, where instability was often an issue. But he kept on working at making the situation better with regular simulator sessions at McLaren's Woking HQ. Finally, the hard work, allied with a summer-break reset trip to his home in Los Angeles, paid off. His upturn in form included his Monza triumph and fifth place at Austin but, despite some better performances on Saturdays, he views one-lap form as an important area to improve for 2022. That will, he feels, “give me that track position for Sunday and keep me out of a little bit more of a mess”.

“He was expected to lead the squad but was left trailing, even humbled”



Hungary was one that got away

This assessment is backed by Ricciardo going from 3-8 down in qualifying (based on Q1/Q2/Q3 session results) against Norris after Hungary (where Ricciardo's chance to score a shock result went begging thanks to Lance Stroll's calamitous error in the wake of Valtteri Bottas's own mistake) to 6-15 by the season's end. Being stuck in the pack contributed to his lock-up and contact with Bottas at the start in Mexico, and meant he was

often trapped in DRS trains.

Ricciardo “made a step” from where he started with McLaren, but still feels he needs “to make another one next year to get where I want to be”. But an observation from Norris on his team-mate's form should leave McLaren fans tantalised at what they can achieve together in the critical 2022 rules reset. “He's actually doing a very good job now,” says the Briton. “And we're pushing each other.”

ALPINE, ALPHATAURI AND ASTON MARTIN

Battle of the 'A' teams

Alpine, AlphaTauri and Aston Martin all had myriad challenges to overcome in 2021 — including each other

JONATHAN NOBLE

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

If Formula 1's fight at the front of the field was incredibly tight and unpredictable at times in 2021, the midfield contest behind McLaren and Ferrari took things to a new level.

In a season when the COVID-triggered homologation rules helped to keep things close, it was clear that there was going to be little to choose between the three 'A' teams:

Aston Martin, AlphaTauri and Alpine. And whereas the battles further up the order came down to car and engine characteristics, plus a little bit of development, the fight between this trio was decided by a wider multitude of factors that left things unpredictable to the end.

Heading in to the season, the money appeared to be on the rebranded Aston Martin team as being the one that could make good gains in 2021. It had shone strongly in the second half of 2020, including Sergio Perez taking his maiden win at the Sakhir Grand Prix, and the impetus and investment triggered by owner Lawrence Stroll's Aston Martin remake looked set to carry the squad further forward. But the team's fate was effectively sealed before a wheel had even turned when it suffered the same setback as Mercedes in being hampered by the new floor regulations that were introduced for 2021 in a bid to slow the cars down.

With the roots of its 'Pink/Green Mercedes' based on the





Aston's Szafnauer thinks
floor rules cost team speed



Vettel finished second in
Baku for Aston Martin

low-rake Mercedes W10, Aston Martin suffered the exact same issue as the reigning world champion squad – it had lost a chunk more downforce than the high-rake cars, thanks to the new aero regulations. Whereas the Mercedes buffer of 0.5-1s per lap that it had over its rivals at times in 2020 meant it was pulled back towards the front of the pack, for Aston Martin – stuck in that ultra-tight midfield tussle – the loss of anything up to one second at some circuits meant it dropped well down the order.

As team principal Otmar Szafnauer said: “The midfield was so tight, the lap time that we lost – seven, eight, nine tenths of a second per lap, depending on what track we were at – moved us

from the third-fastest car to about the sixth, seventh-fastest car. Whereas with Mercedes, they too lost because of the aerodynamic philosophy they run, that just moved them from always being on pole to now fighting for the championship.”

While the team tried to make amends for the performance deficit, it was a tough task to tweak its package to get around the rule implications because the homologation rules were so tight. In simple terms, moving to a high-rake concept would mean a change of rear suspension – something that wasn't allowed in-season.

Initially Stroll and Szafnauer vented their fury at the FIA, and posed questions about how much influence F1's commercial rights ►



Midfield
battle between
AlphaTauri, Aston
Martin and Alpine
squads was tight
all season

**“There were days when the
Aston Martin team shone –
helped in part by the vastly
experienced Vettel”**



holder had in helping frame the regulation changes for 2021 – and there was even talk of a potential legal challenge. In the end those threats faded away, Aston Martin realised it had to accept what had been done, and got on with developing its way out of the situation. And some improvements did come.

But knowing that the wholesale change it needed to make a big leap forward was not possible, Aston Martin took the decision to pretty much abandon aero development of the AMR21 early and join other squads in focusing more on what's coming for 2022.

That's not to say that the team rolled over and gave up on things entirely, because there were days when it shone – helped in part by the vastly experienced Sebastian Vettel making the most of those chaotic afternoons when big points were up for grabs. In June's Azerbaijan GP he finished second, and in Hungary he challenged Esteban Ocon for the win all the way through to the end. But a fuel leak meant that he would lose his podium finish because there was not enough petrol left in his tank for the mandatory post-race FIA checks.

From then on, Aston's season fell away as its high-drag car (a consequence of it bolting on more downforce to counter the floor performance losses) simply could not compete on equal terms with

“On pure pace, it should have been AlphaTauri that bossed the three-way battle”

the consistently fast AlphaTauri or a much-improved Alpine team that built up some pretty good momentum.

On pure pace terms – especially on Saturday afternoons – it should have

been AlphaTauri that bossed this three-way battle in the middle of the pack. Its Honda-powered AT02 was good enough to be a regular Q3 contender – indeed, Pierre Gasly failed to make it there just four times out of 22. But two factors held the team back from the fifth-placed slot it clearly had the machinery for.

The main one was its driver line-up. Alongside Gasly, the team promoted young Japanese Yuki Tsunoda from Formula 2. It initially appeared to have been an inspired move when he shone brilliantly at the season-opening Bahrain GP, overtaking Fernando Alonso at one stage, scoring points and being hailed by F1 sporting chief Ross Brawn as one of the most promising rookies for years. But AlphaTauri's and Tsunoda's season came crashing down at Imola when he smashed his car up in Q1.

It triggered a run of shunts and errors in the opening phase of the campaign that dented Tsunoda's confidence. Following an enforced move to near AlphaTauri's Faenza factory, it took him until well into the second half of the campaign to regain



Vettel proves his worth again – in and out of the car

Sebastian Vettel became a hero for many in 2021 but, perhaps unfortunately for him, it was not entirely down to what he did on the track.

Aston Martin's struggles with an AMR21 that had been hobbled by the new aero regulations were not aided by the German taking a bit longer than he had hoped to get used to the all-new platform, after his years racing a high-rake Ferrari. By the time he got up to speed with the car, Aston Martin had pretty much turned off the development tap as it realised there was not much to gain in doing better in 2021, especially if it risked falling behind in 2022.

For Vettel the season explanation was easy: "I think I took a little bit too long to get used to everything. And too many little mistakes here and there. Sometimes racing didn't go our way. Starting from the back too many times. So yeah, we know what do we have to work on and let's see what we can do next time."

Vettel had his days, though. He bounced back from a tough 2020, which included taking his 122nd F1 podium in Baku and what

should have been another in Hungary were it not for a fuel rules breach by his team.

But what Vettel will be mostly remembered for in 2021 is his off-track campaigning: from the litter picking at Silverstone; building the bee farm in Austria; his proud wearing of rainbow colours; and his intelligent remarks about human rights.

"He's such a man of integrity, he works hard with a great work ethic"

It was off-track too where his team fell in love with him. As well as delivering when opportunity came knocking on track, he proved to be an incredibly hard worker in trying to help push Aston Martin forward on its road to recovery.

"He's been brilliant," says team boss Otmar Szafnauer. "He's such a man of integrity, he works hard, great work ethic, leaves no stone unturned. The engineers like working with him, the mechanics love him as a person. He's just a genuine guy. And that goes a long way in life."



Vettel was admired by many in 2021 for his off-track campaigning



Hungary was a high point for Alpine. Ocon (right) took first win, aided by Alonso

his belief and confidence. A season-best fourth in the season-closing Abu Dhabi GP showed promise for the future, but it wasn't lost on the team that Tsunoda only contributed 32 points to its constructors' tally, compared to Gasly's 110. Considering it missed out on fifth spot by 13 points, it's clear how much it hurt not to have two equal drivers.

Things were also not helped by the team not capitalising as often as it should have done on its pure speed. Some in-race incidents (Gasly losing front wings against Daniel Ricciardo in Bahrain and the Monza sprint race) allied to some pace struggles (especially in Qatar) gave Alpine all the room it needed to win this battle.

For Alpine, there was no shying away from the fact that it finished fifth despite not having the fifth-fastest car. In fact, at the start of the season, it wasn't clear that what had previously been the Renault squad would even be involved among the front end of the midfield battle at all.

The returning Alonso found himself needing some time to get up to speed again, and the Enstone squad was not especially comfortable in understanding how to get the most out of its A521. That was not helped by it running a Renault powerplant that had not been upgraded much for three years (it opted to bring a new version for 2022's new rules), and the team faced a spell early on when it was confused about where the pace in its car was. "At the beginning of the season we were lost: like Monaco actually is a very poor memory, like a bad moment," says CEO Laurent Rossi. "We were lost. We had no idea what to do. We scored points but we don't even know how. That was difficult because we didn't understand the car so well."

While the Alpine package may not have been the strongest in this three-way 'A' team contest, where the team proved ultimately stronger over the second half of the campaign was in having two superbly strong drivers, plus a pitwall that was razor sharp when it came to making the most of opportunities.

There was no bigger opportunity than August's Hungarian GP, where, thanks to the first-corner accident, Esteban Ocon found himself at the front of the pack. With the help of some superb defensive driving from Alonso in delaying a pursuing Lewis Hamilton, he maintained his composure to grab his maiden F1 win.

That day proved to be Alpine's biggest points haul of the season, but on tracks that suited its car – those with smooth asphalt, a high-downforce requirement and at sea level – Ocon and Alonso were able to bring home the points that proved critical in the battle for fifth.

It was the late-season round in Qatar that ultimately sealed it. AlphaTauri suffered a tyre-degradation disaster and Gasly slumped from a front-row start to finish 11th, while Alonso grabbed his sole podium finish of the year. Alongside Ocon's fifth position, that delivered an evening haul that clinched this contest. ■

WILLIAMS

Williams takes big steps in its revival

It was a season of highs and lows for the famous British team in 2021, from sealing a hard-earned eighth in the championship to the loss of founder Sir Frank Williams

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY

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“

f you need to compromise my race to help Nicky, do it. Prioritise Nicky.” The radio message from George Russell after the early-race chaos in August’s Hungarian Grand Prix was a sign of the breakthrough moment he knew was within Williams’s grasp.

Nicholas Latifi sat a heady third following a red flag for the Turn 1 crashes and some tyre mix-ups off the restart. Russell had also battled into the points, but knew the bigger chance lay ahead for his Canadian team-mate. While both would go on to score points in Hungary, acting as the latest major step in Williams’s revival and reconstruction, there were more ups – and downs – to come as it finally ditched its ‘basement team’ tag after three difficult years.

“There were really high highs and very low lows,” says Williams team boss Jost Capito. “We went through a lot of various emotions for the team throughout the season.”

The performance swings were partly expected. Williams entered the season believing that its car, the FW43B, would be peaky and very wind-sensitive due to its aerodynamic concept, and doubted it could be a regular points-scoring force. But after making some decent progress through 2020 and getting closer to the lower midfield, the plan was to continue its gradual steps forward with an eye on the future.

The team found itself falling into a habit of being in the right place at the wrong time. Whenever it executed perfect races, there

would be 20 finishers or a lack of drama ahead. Russell put in star displays in France (finishing 12th on merit) and both Austria weekends. He ran eighth in the first Red Bull Ring race before a pneumatic pressure issue forced him to retire, and then reached Q3 on mediums one weekend later before being denied a point in a late battle against Fernando Alonso.

Russell looks back fondly on that run of form, even if there were no points. “That was a period where everything was coming towards us and coming our way,” recalls Russell. “I felt great inside of the car. I would say the two Austrias and Paul Ricard were probably the best [races of the season].”

Capito also noted the improving atmosphere as belief grew that a breakthrough would soon come. “When we started to have 11th position, and we saw that we can race with some cars in the midfield, of course it gives a boost,” he says. “You improve more if you’re in the position that you can fight with other cars and race others – and this is also what we found with race drivers: they’ve got a completely different motivation if they’re just running around at the back of the field or if they can be in a fight.”

And then came Hungary. Ironically, it took Williams’s worst qualifying result of the season – Russell 17th, Latifi 18th – for it to be in the right place. The first-corner chaos in the wet took out the frontrunners and, as the midfielders dodged each other, Latifi and Russell were able to sneak through to third and seventh respectively once the race had restarted and everyone had switched to slicks.



Russell impressed with second on the grid in wet qualifying session at Spa



First-corner chaos in Hungary meant Latifi was able to finish seventh

“To finish P8 with more points on the board this year than the last three combined is a massive achievement”



Controversial shortened Belgian GP enabled the team to secure 10 very valuable points

It was then that Russell gave his powerful radio call. He'd seen this story before for Williams, and didn't want to let this opportunity slip after over two years of trying. But there was no need to compromise his race in the end. Both drivers kept cool to cross the line seventh and eighth, giving Williams its first points in over two years, and its best result since the 2017 Italian GP.

There were wild celebrations in the pitlane as the team moved to the dizzy heights of eighth in the constructors' championship. Russell even shed a tear as he conducted his media pen interviews, knowing how much it meant to the whole team. At long last, Williams's efforts had been rewarded.

Capito looks back on the race as a result Williams fully deserved for its “brave decisions” during the GP. “If you are in the position to take the points then if you can't take them then you haven't done your job,” he says. “But as we were in the position to take the points, and finish in the points with both cars, then we started saying, ‘OK, can we do more?’”

Yes, Williams could. With the summer break complete and a Mercedes contract signed for 2022, Russell showed exactly why he is set to shine next season, with a wet-weather lap of the gods at Spa. Perfect preparation allowed him to nail the lap and grab second on the grid, three tenths off Max Verstappen on pole.

Amid the sourness and rightful anger that many F1 fans felt on Sunday at Spa, when rain limited running to two processional laps behind the safety car, Williams had cause for celebration. Russell's stunning lap meant he was second when the race was called, giving the team a podium and, thanks to Latifi in ninth, another 10 points to all but secure eighth in the standings.

More points at Monza and Sochi – the latter after another wet qualifying masterclass put Russell third on the grid – helped keep Alfa Romeo at bay. “We've finished P10 in the championship three years in a row, so to finish P8 with more points on the board this year than the last three combined is a massive achievement,” declares Russell. “Hopefully it catapults them to even more success next year.”

Even if he's not in a Williams next season, Russell will have played an integral role in any success it does enjoy in 2022. He helped to energise the team and keep it moving from its lowest moments in 2019. He also hopes that Latifi, who has “really come along well” this year, has a “more stable and consistent car and his true pace will be able to shine”.

The foundations being laid for Williams's future did not just come with its on-track achievements this year. Upon taking over as CEO last December, Capito was clear in his push to make



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“We’re just trying to lay the foundations, so when we have a more competitive car we’ll be able to capitalise on it”

changes. He set out a 100-day plan to complete a top-to-bottom review of the team and its operations, identifying areas to improve as the Dorilton ownership put an end to any financial concerns.

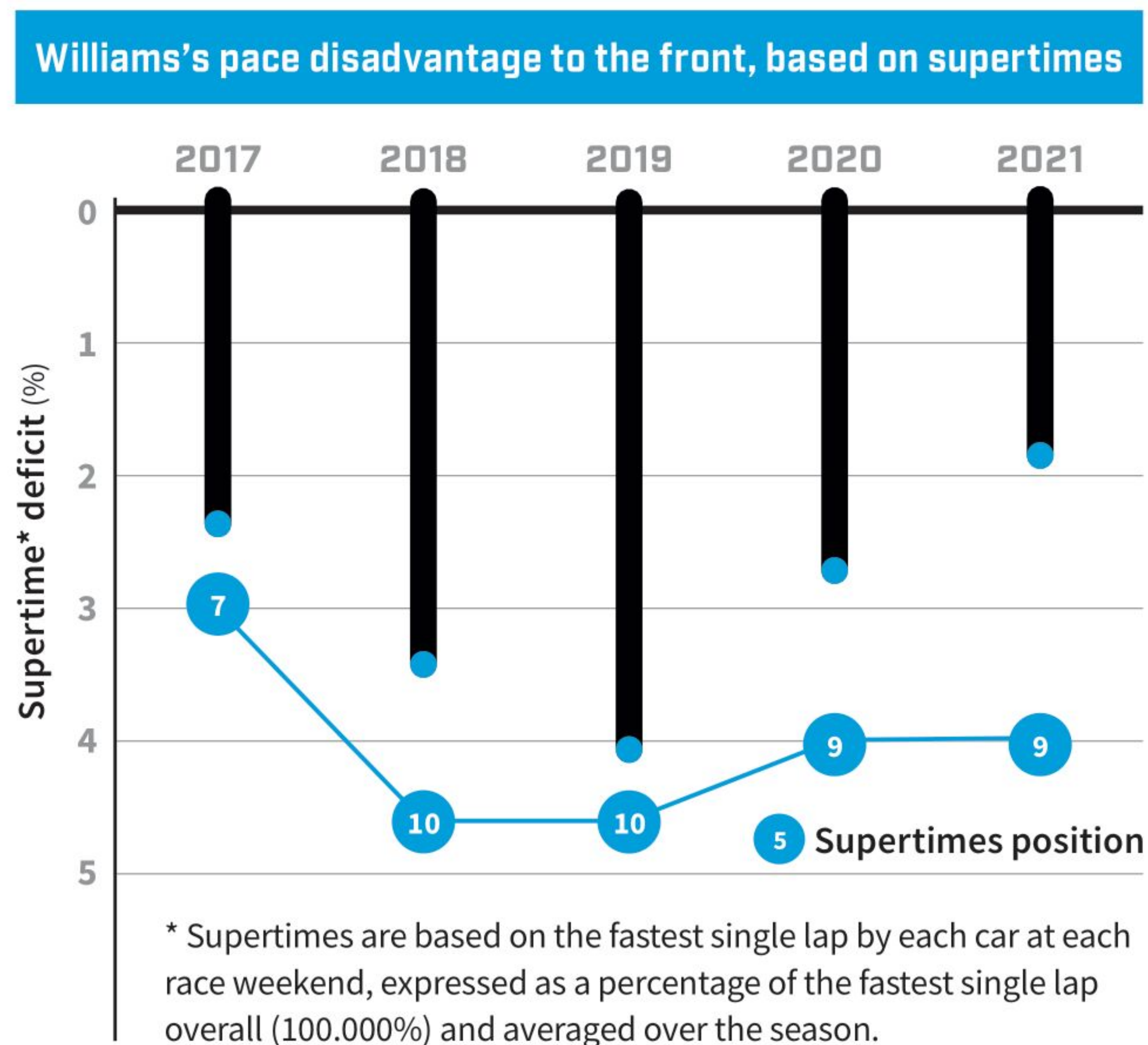
The biggest thing Capito identified was a need for clear leadership and some internal restructuring, finding that the team had been working in silos too much. He wanted to ensure “one leadership, under somebody who has a lot of motorsport experience in all kinds of engineering, rather than car engineering or car development”, in the hope of bearing fruit in 2022 and beyond. It led to the departure of Simon Roberts and the arrival of Francois-Xavier (known as ‘FX’) Demaison, who Capito worked with at Volkswagen in the World Rally Championship, as technical director.

“The way we’re operating as a team is definitely much better,” says Latifi. “We’ve been taking more risks at various points, which has been shown by some of the good performances. There’s only so much you can do with the pace of the car we have, so we’re just trying to lay the foundations on that front, so when we do have a more competitive car and competitive package we’ll be able to capitalise on it.”

Latifi will be joined at Williams next season by Alex Albon, who won the race for the seat amid significant interest in the driver market. The rules reset for 2022 may offer an opportunity to the entire grid, but for Williams it’s the chance to further its recent progress and put its malaise firmly in the past.

But 2021 will not be a year of solely good memories for the team. At the end of November, its founder, Sir Frank Williams, died at the age of 79, sparking an outpouring of tributes from the F1 world. He had been one of motorsport’s most influential and important figures, battling adversity to turn his humble team into a multi-championship winner.

Entering 2022, the team carrying the Williams name will maintain and channel his fighting spirit as it looks to build on this season, when important breakthroughs showed that the good times may not be so far away again. ■



No escaping ‘Class C’ fight for Alfa Romeo



“Good on performance, bad on results,” was team principal Frederic Vasseur’s assessment of Alfa Romeo’s 2021 season as it slumped to ninth in the standings, dropping below Williams despite arguably having a faster car.

It had all started so brightly. With a better Ferrari engine, Alfa Romeo targeted a return to the midfield proper. Antonio Giovinazzi and Kimi Raikkonen ran on the fringes of the points in the opening rounds, and got on the board in Monaco and Baku. Giovinazzi’s Monaco display in particular, where he reached Q3 and came home 10th, bred confidence.

“But then we had a tough period in the summer,” said Vasseur. “Perhaps we were on vacation!”

He may joke, but it was a run of races where Alfa Romeo saw itself slip further away from points contention. In Hungary and Belgium, as Williams capitalised on the drama ahead, Raikkonen brought home just a single point.

Some strong late-season

displays offered points in Russia, Mexico and Saudi Arabia, but it was never going to be enough, even as it largely outpaced Williams.

“It doesn’t matter to be faster if you’re not scoring points,” says Vasseur. “It’s a bit frustrating for the team. We had a feeling that we did a step forward in terms of pure performance, but we didn’t achieve and didn’t score the points.”

Raikkonen rode into the sunset eager to get a

“We had a tough summer. Perhaps we were on vacation!”

“normal life”, hanging up his helmet after an F1 career spanning 20 years, while Giovinazzi was dropped to make way for an all-new line-up of Valtteri Bottas and Guanyu Zhou in 2022.

It’ll be the start of a new era and a chance to escape the lower-midfield but, as Alfa Romeo found out this year, having an advantage on paper means nothing without points to back it up.

THE ROOKIES

Tough job for the first years

There were three rookies on the grid this year — and the going proved tricky for all of them

STUART CODLING

Blessed is he who expects nothing," wrote the poet Alexander Pope, "for he shall never be disappointed."

Two of the three drivers to make their Formula 1 debuts this season came freighted with high expectations: Yuki Tsunoda, anointed as F1's next big thing by no less an eminence than Red Bull's driver advisor Helmut Marko; and Mick Schumacher, son of seven-time world champion Michael, discreetly supported by Ferrari and surrounded by much of dad's protective entourage. It's fair to say neither of them have made an immediate impact you could describe as Ayrton Senna-like, Lewis Hamilton-like or, dare we say it, Schumacher-like.

Given the substantial powertrain technology step between F2 and F1 in the hybrid era, beyond even the difference in downforce levels, was it fair to expect the outcome to be any different?

YUKI TSUNODA

Can do better 14th (32 points)

There were those who thought that Marko was edging out on the proverbial limb when he made the unequivocal claim that Tsunoda had been faster than Mick Schumacher in F2. Still, the Honda protege arrived in F1 as arguably the most exciting prospect to emerge from Red Bull's young driver programme since Max Verstappen.

In Bahrain, Tsunoda became the first driver to score points on their grand prix debut since Stoffel Vandoorne in 2016. The swashbuckling manner in which he did so — racking up the overtakes after an indifferent first lap, and mugging Lance Stroll for ninth on the final tour — seemed to provide ample justification for Marko's faith. Indeed, it was a display that moved F1 director of motorsports Ross Brawn to describe Tsunoda as "the best





Formula 1 rookie in years” — a tag the young Japanese driver spent the rest of the season struggling to justify.

After Bahrain, Tsunoda was generally outshone by his more experienced team-mate Pierre Gasly, particularly in qualifying, as he found it more difficult than anticipated to adapt to the different downforce levels in F1, the vagaries of the Pirelli tyres, and a car that could be quick on one-lap pace but which exhibited a disturbing tendency to eat up its rubber.

In these last two respects Tsunoda shares a burden with his fellow rookies: that of arriving in an interim year, one in which the aerodynamics of the cars have had to be hacked about to protect an obsolescent family of tyres. Disappointingly for a driver viewed as quick to learn and adapt, one of his responses to the challenge was to go to pieces. In the wake of being eliminated in Q1 at Barcelona, he went as far as claiming he was receiving unequal treatment and equipment to Gasly. “I lost my mind,” he reflected later.

There were signs of improvement later in the season, particularly in Hungary, where Tsunoda stood aloof from the chaos to snatch sixth; the US GP, where he made one of his too-infrequent visits to Q3 and finished ninth; and the Abu Dhabi finale. But he was still nearly a second off Gasly in Q3 at Austin and had to resort to the strategically sub-optimal soft tyre to get there, which put him on the back foot in the opening stint.

Alex Albon, who has been coaching Tsunoda behind the scenes, now has an F1 drive again, so it will be up to Tsunoda to manage his sophomore season. It’s clear where the improvements need to come: maximising the car in qualifying, avoiding trouble in the race, and swearing a little less down the team radio.

MICK SCHUMACHER

Should do better 19th (0 points)

Much ink has been spilled on the subject of Schumacher’s path through the junior formulas and we do not propose to add to the puddle here. Suffice to say that he clocked in as F2 champion and the subject of great excitement, given his surname. He also arrived with a fully formed support group staffed by his father’s former entourage, and the gift of being able to conduct a lengthy interview session without saying much of substance.

“It’s been a lot better than I pictured,” he said of his maiden F1 season in one such exchange. “On the racing side we knew it was going to be a difficult year but I think we managed as a team well.”

Mick has a remarkable talent for understatement. Haas, a team which has barely been able to keep the lights on for the past 18 months, approached the 2021 season with a car barely changed from the previous year except where it had been cut-and-shut to meet the new regulations. Even the tubs were carried over. Aside from a smattering of components already signed off ahead of the season opener, it received no meaningful upgrades.

To attempt to drive the VF-21 at speed sometimes seemed to put its pilots on the edge of a massive accident, so both Schumacher ►

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and team-mate Nikita Mazepin deserve credit for crashing less often than they might have done. But while the poverty spec of the car has mitigated some of the weight of expectation on Schumacher, and made it impossible to evaluate him rigorously against the rest of the field, it's fair to say that he's had his team-mate well beaten.

Schumacher was routinely quicker than Mazepin in qualifying by an order of magnitude. Mazepin's camp point out that their man was saddled with a much-patched chassis believed to be 4kg heavier than Schumacher's, which was a newer one built up after Romain Grosjean's shunt in Bahrain last season. This has an effect on tuning the handling via ballast as well as outright weight, but surely cannot account for gaps of up to a second or more.

Schumacher was sporadically impressive when the car permitted. At Paul Ricard he made it through to Q2 for the first time, though he shunted on his final run. In Hungary he had another big accident, this time in FP3 (a random gust of wind at the wrong time after he'd rooted his tyres by pushing too hard). Then, after missing qualifying, he profited from the Turn 1 chaos to run in the points briefly, battling confidently with Max Verstappen. Just as impressive was the way he held off Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi late on, while repeatedly having to obey blue flags, to hold on to 13th (which later became 12th), even though it wouldn't earn him points.

When Mick shunted in Saudi Arabia he was trying to get into the DRS window to attack George Russell's Williams. You've got to admire his fighting spirit – and, if he follows the trend he established in the junior formulas of making huge improvements in his second year, he may yet fulfil all those great expectations.

NIKITA MAZEPIN

Must do better 21st (0 points)

"You have to eat an elephant bite by bite," Mazepin told reporters ahead of the season finale. "To me F1 and an elephant feel quite similar."

It is Mazepin's occasionally questionable on-track etiquette rather than his dietary habits that have caught the eye during his rookie season, that and a veritable smorgasbord of spins and shunts. This should come as no surprise given his track record of self-control issues, such as punching Callum Ilott in the face during an F3 event in 2016, and more recently coming close to mowing down Tsunoda in parc ferme after last year's Spa F2 feature race. That said, he has largely kept his temper in check during his maiden F1 season, although relations with



It's been a season marked by off-track excursions, but Mazepin has shown improvement

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

team-mate Schumacher have scarcely been cordial. In one notable – and ugly – reversion to habits exhibited in F2, Mazepin nearly put Schumacher in the wall at Zandvoort.

He has also been maligned for leapfrogging other drivers in the queue to take a flying lap during qualifying, a tactic that is accepted in F2 but considered to be against the "gentlemen's agreement" in F1. Still, the conduct of F1 luminaries (including Sebastian Vettel and Verstappen)

who essentially did the same thing to Mazepin in Jeddah suggests the gentlemen's agreement isn't worth the paper it's not written on.

Mazepin was arguably better prepared for his debut than either Tsunoda or Schumacher, since his father (whose money has essentially kept the Haas team afloat) paid for an extensive private testing programme in a 2017 Mercedes F1 car during 2020. 'Arguably' being the operative word, since the Haas is a lesser car. "Him driving the

Mercedes last year, I think he learned something, but he has to learn our car is not as good as a Mercedes," said Haas team boss Gunther Steiner after Mazepin spun out of first practice at Imola. "He needs to find that limit but that's [for] him to find, not us. We have got the whole year to learn. Hopefully we haven't got the year to spin."

Mazepin has demonstrated improvement, albeit from a low bar, especially after his father paid for a new tub to replace the elderly and overweight one he had been complaining about since the first round. He was reduced to tears at Interlagos after blundering on his fastest Q1 lap, one which might have been quicker than Schumacher's. While he has only finished ahead of Schumacher three times, he has retired less often than you might think, and not all of those failures were his own making: in Hungary, for instance, Kimi Raikkonen's Alfa Romeo was released into his path in the pitlane. Overall, though, the impression is one of a driver operating at the boundaries of a limited skill set keeping a dreadful car on the track. ■



Schumacher and Mazepin battle it out, this time without near-calamity

MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Vettel delivered a canny and gutsy performance to take fifth place in Monaco

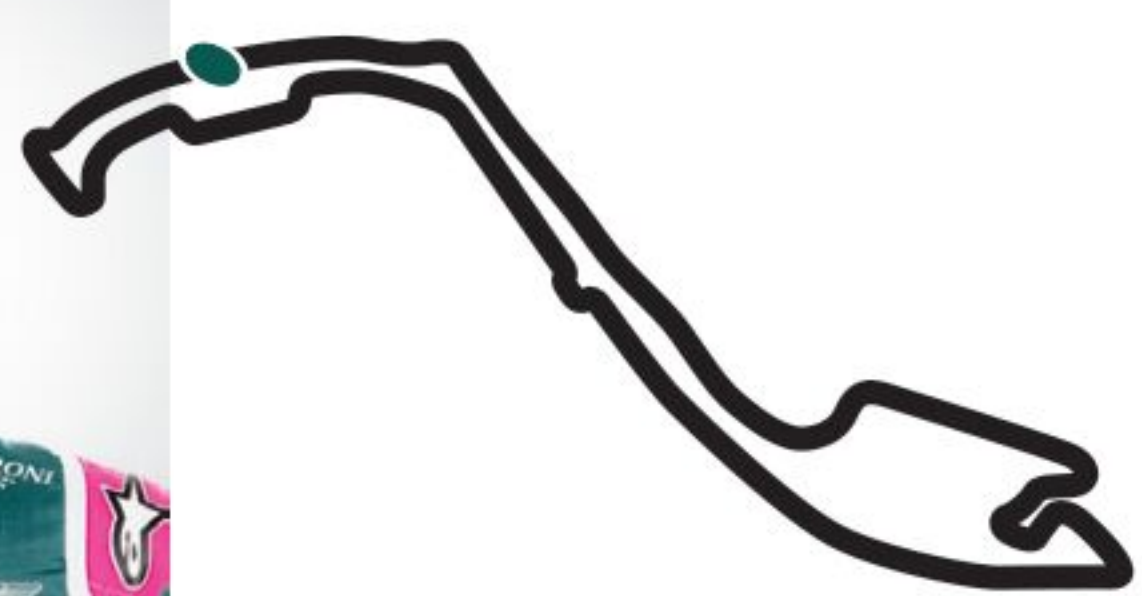


STARRING ROLES

The best race drives of 2021

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES



Sebastian Vettel Monaco GP (5th)

The Monaco Grand Prix is famously challenging, with forward progress far from guaranteed given that passing is essentially impossible. But Sebastian Vettel pulled off an excellent race to rise up the order and, in the process, beat the driver who nearly won the world title in what was very close to being the season's fastest package.

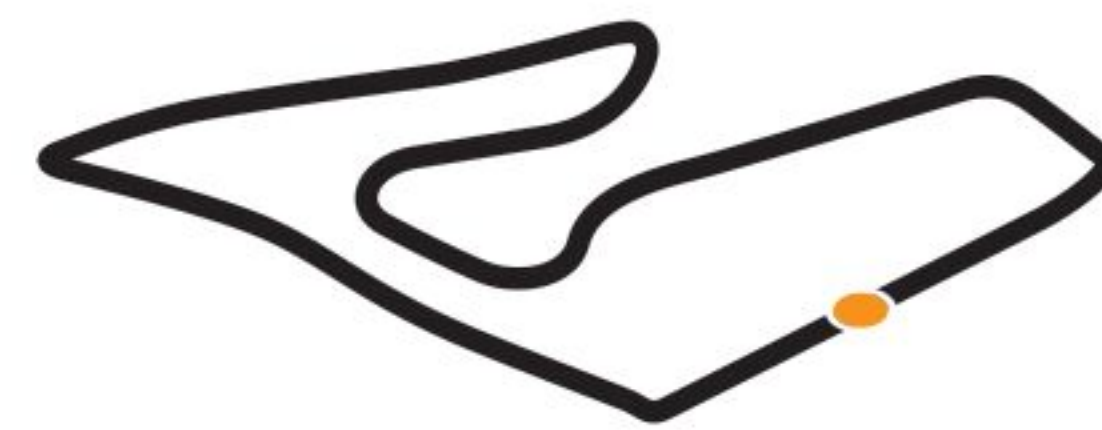
Vettel qualified eighth – the best result to date of his first year with Aston Martin – and ran seventh behind Lewis Hamilton and Pierre Gasly during the early stages, all three boosted by Charles Leclerc's non-start.

When Mercedes brought Hamilton in just past the one-third mark, as the first driver to pit, AlphaTauri immediately covered him with Gasly, while Aston gave Vettel a further lap on the soft tyres. After saving tyre life while sitting behind Hamilton, Vettel unleashed his full pace and was able to jump ahead of both rivals when he emerged from his stop for hard rubber. His rise against Gasly was sealed by a close but “hard but fair” (said Gasly) move near the barriers entering Massenet.

Although Sergio Perez leapfrogged all three in his own overcut with the much faster Red Bull, Vettel held off Gasly to the finish to take a fine fifth.



Lando Norris Austrian GP (3rd)

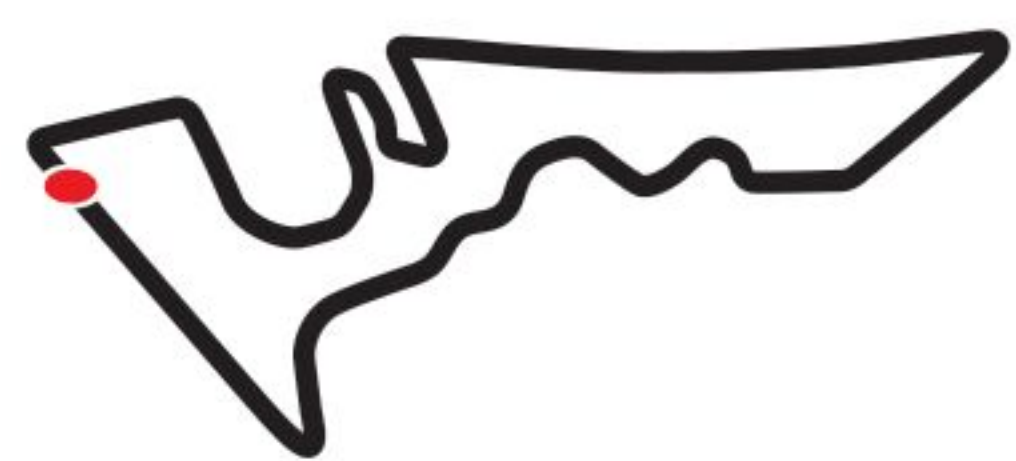


Although this was a race that Max Verstappen dominated, it shouldn't be forgotten that McLaren's Lando Norris came within 0.048 seconds of beating him to pole and was a threat to the Red Bull driver at the start.

Norris picked up a contentious penalty in a Turn 4 clash with Sergio Perez following the safety car restart (one we still disagree was worthy of sanction, and the same goes for Perez's first clash with Leclerc at the same corner later in the race). Afterwards he was a serious problem for both Mercedes drivers as Verstappen scampered clear. For 16 laps he held off Lewis Hamilton, who hailed “great

driver” Norris after he'd finally battled past.

After his penalty was applied at his stop, Norris dropped behind Valtteri Bottas because of the extra five-second hold. But he was homing back in on Bottas even before he caught back up to the two Mercedes after Hamilton's kerb strike caused left-rear brake aerodynamic damage, which skewed his handling and forced Mercedes into reversing the order of its cars to preserve second place. He repassed Hamilton before his fellow Briton pitted for balance alterations, and stayed third to the finish, where Norris was livid that his penalty had cost him a shot at second position.



Charles Leclerc

United States GP (4th)

Several of Charles Leclerc's race performances were candidates for this list. His brilliance in the wet at Imola, where he drove away from Sergio Perez in the much faster Red Bull, was ruined by the red flag, while in Spain he outqualified and beat Perez again and also ruined Valtteri Bottas's chances with his brilliant around-the-outside pass at Turn 3 on lap one. Then there's his near-victory at Silverstone ahead of a charging Lewis Hamilton after the title contenders collided, a drive that included having to manage an intermittent engine-mapping-management problem.

Leclerc picked that race as his

best of the year because it was "a big surprise for everyone, to be so competitive" and, while it ended up being his top result, we feel his essentially faultless drive at Austin was even better.

Leclerc had qualified just 0.1s slower than Bottas, and moved up to fourth when the Finn's grid penalty was applied. He fell back from the lead fight as would be expected, but simply drove away from Daniel Ricciardo's McLaren with a performance he felt was a series of qualifying laps from start to finish. His pace was so strong that he even briefly looked like he'd close on the sick and under-hydrated Perez for third late on.



HONE



Lewis Hamilton

Sao Paulo GP (1st)



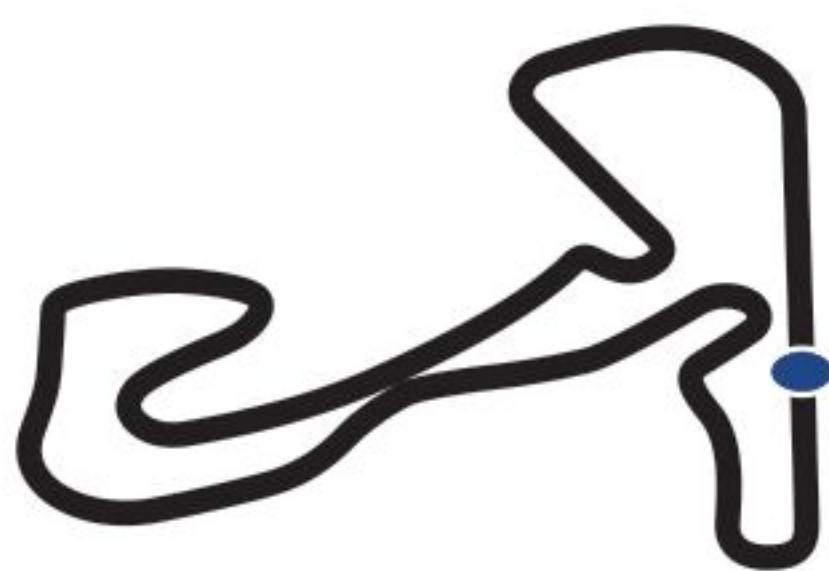
While it's interesting to consider that only a perceived injustice brought out Hamilton's absolute best in 2021 – something the rest of the field should take note of for 2022 – the way he responded to his Interlagos qualifying disqualification was sensational.

After starting last in the sprint race, he gained five places on the opening lap, then 10 more with a series of passes to end up fifth. The highlight was his late dive on Lando Norris, where the McLaren driver resisted fighting too hard.

But Hamilton had to go back to 10th for the start of the second race due to taking the new internal combustion engine, which did

provide a power boost through its freshness. He made short work of rising up the order to trail Max Verstappen. He chased him through two pitstops and, despite all the excellent passing he'd already produced, he had to be at his best to get past a rival who refused to play by acceptable sporting rules – permitted to do so by a lack of intervention from the officials.

Verstappen's aggressive Turn 4 defence late on meant Hamilton stayed second, but he learned from the incident, got the Red Bull to react as he wanted to the second time, and then positioned his car to ensure that a famous pass and victory were sealed.



Max Verstappen

Dutch GP (1st)

While Max Verstappen was tremendous throughout his first title-winning campaign, he had two races up for consideration on this list. His Mexican GP triumph, which featured the passing move of the season around the outside of the two Mercedes drivers at Turn 1, only narrowly misses out because it was a race where Red Bull was expected to dominate, and he duly did once he was in the early race lead.

At Zandvoort, finally making its appearance back on the F1 calendar, things were ultra-close with Mercedes, although Verstappen's Red Bull did ultimately have a slight pace edge. Add in the incredible level of home support for the Dutchman, and the expectation that came with it, and this was



far from a given for the 24-year-old.

But he was pretty much faultless all weekend, other than running wide at Hugenholtz on his final lap in Q3. In the race, he aced the start, which was crucial to his victory, then controlled things at the

front ahead of the relentless Lewis Hamilton. He didn't get knocked off his stride when Mercedes tried strategic variation as the only way to disrupt things, or when Valtteri Bottas was employed as a (pretty ineffective) rolling roadblock.



ETHERINGTON

POLITICS

The year that diplomacy died

The let's-pull-together blitz spirit of the COVID-ravaged 2020 season was replaced by an escalating war between Mercedes and Red Bull. Here's how it played out

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES

“**T**hey definitely have a true dislike for each other. It's added to the drama. I think you do see them playing to the camera a bit from time to time.” McLaren CEO Zak Brown's summary may have befitted Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton in 2021. But it was their respective team bosses, Christian Horner of Red Bull and Toto Wolff of Mercedes, who Brown was talking about after one of the most toxic political battles Formula 1 has seen in the past decade.

Horner said 2021 had been “by far the most intense political fight we've been involved in in our time in this sport” as Red Bull looked to dethrone Mercedes from its seven consecutive years as constructors' champion. It led to a season of shots being fired back and forth, appeals against rulings, recreations of incidents, rights to reviews, on-track collisions, and controversy that went down to the very last lap of the season – and beyond.

The political landscape in F1 this year was vastly different to 2020, when battles had engulfed all teams at one point or another, particularly through the Concorde Agreement renewal. Bar some early-season gripes from Aston Martin over the downforce cuts to slow the cars down, politics in F1 this year really came down to two teams: Mercedes and Red Bull.

It had all started so cordially. The aero cuts had hurt Mercedes badly and brought Red Bull into the fight, yet this was a challenge that was welcomed. After seven years of largely unrivalled dominance, Mercedes looked in danger of losing its crowns, but both Hamilton and the team felt energised by the new fight as wins were traded back and forth through the early part of the season.

The first major political flare-up came at the Spanish Grand Prix, when a throwaway comment by Hamilton about Red Bull's “bendy wing” – he was inferring that the rules were being exploited to





Horner: Mercedes
straightline speed
“mindboggling”



Silverstone clash and
crash left Verstappen
angry and in hospital



Helmut Marko: vocal
Hamilton critic

boost top speed on the straights while retaining downforce for corners — started the first of the rear-wing-design sagas of 2021. Red Bull stressed its design had passed FIA tests, but a clampdown from the governing body followed, only for a delay in the rules coming into force leading to protest threats. Red Bull turned things around on Mercedes. “If I was Toto with the front wing he’s got on his car, I’d keep my mouth shut,” said Horner. Wolff fired back by calling his counterpart “a bit of a windbag who wants to be on camera”. The saga fizzled out without a protest in Baku before the clampdown came into force — but bigger trouble was brewing.

It was inevitable, really. Hamilton and Verstappen couldn’t go the whole season without their on-track battle spilling over and ending in contact, which finally came on the opening lap of the British GP. As the duo went wheel to wheel into Copse, their cars touched, sending Verstappen off track and into the wall at a force of 51G. Hamilton was hit with a 10-second penalty after he was deemed to be predominantly to blame, but recovered to win his home race for an eighth time. Red Bull was furious. Horner called Hamilton’s move “amateurish” and “desperate”, and branded it “dirty driving”. Red Bull’s Helmut Marko accused Hamilton of “reckless driving”, while Verstappen felt aggrieved that Mercedes celebrated the win while he was in hospital undergoing precautionary checks.

The comments prompted Mercedes to fight back. “The language that was used, and making it so personal, was a level we have not seen in this sport before,” said Wolff. Hamilton faced a barrage of racist abuse online, which was condemned in a joint statement from F1, Mercedes and Red Bull. Hamilton felt it was “the first time that I didn’t stand alone in the sport” when dealing with such abuse.

“The language used, and making it so personal, was a level we have not seen before”

Red Bull remained adamant that Hamilton deserved a greater penalty for the crash, prompting it to request a right of review with the FIA stewards. After promising to “bring new facts” to light, Red Bull’s bid was thrown out by the stewards, who did not deem a re-enactment of Hamilton’s line by reserve driver Alex Albon during a Silverstone filming day to be either significant or relevant. Mercedes said it hoped the decision would “mark the end of a concerted attempt by the senior management of Red Bull to tarnish the good name and sporting integrity of Lewis Hamilton”.

The summer months cooled things off, only for another collision to relight the fuse at Monza. This time, it was Verstappen who was judged to be at fault for not backing out of the battle into the first chicane, resulting in his car landing on top of Hamilton’s and eliminating both from the race. Wolff called it a “tactical foul”; Horner said it was a “racing incident”. It only added fuel to the fire to both the on-track battle and the political scrap.

The Sao Paulo GP was the race that would turn the needle between Wolff and Horner into something greater. In the space of two weeks, they went from comparing each other to characters in a pantomime to threatening protests and declaring there was “no ►

relationship” between their respective teams. The drama on the Interlagos weekend this time started as early as Friday. After Hamilton had taken pole position for the sprint race by a mammoth four tenths of a second, his rear wing failed a technical check, leading to his exclusion from qualifying. Verstappen had also been investigated after he breached parc ferme rules by touching Hamilton’s rear wing after the session, leading to a €50,000 fine. But his comment that he touched it to see “how much the rear wing was flexing” set off the second flexi-wing saga for the season, with Red Bull claiming that “score marks” on the Mercedes proved there was some flexing. Mercedes denied this was the case, and said Red Bull had seen “a ghost”.

Hamilton’s subsequent performance at Interlagos only stoked the fire further. Armed with a fresh engine, he charged from last to fifth in the sprint race, then went from 10th after a grid penalty to win on Sunday, displaying what Horner called “mindboggling” straight-line speed. The win came after another wheel-to-wheel fight with Verstappen that sparked controversy. Verstappen forced Hamilton

“I’ve always been diplomatic in how I discuss things. But diplomacy has ended today”

wide at Turn 4 and, although Hamilton would go on to overtake and win the race, the stewards’ decision not to take action was called “laughable” by Wolff. “We’ve had many, many punches in the face this weekend,” he said. “When always the decisions swing against you, it’s something that I’m just angry about, and I will defend my team and my drivers to what comes. I’ve always been very diplomatic in how I discuss things. But diplomacy has ended today.”

It set up a terse press conference between Wolff and Horner one week later in Qatar. The threat of a protest from Red Bull against Mercedes’ rear wing still loomed, but ultimately came to nothing after the FIA introduced new checks that appeased Red Bull despite holding no regulatory impact. Mercedes’ request to review the Interlagos Turn 4 incident got thrown out, leaving some drivers unclear on what was and was not permitted in wheel-to-wheel battles.

It was in Qatar that Horner said there was “no relationship” between the two teams. “There is respect for everything that Mercedes have done and everything that Lewis Hamilton has done, but I don’t need to go to dinner with Toto,” Horner said. “I don’t need to kiss his arse, or anything like that.” Wolff compared their fight to MMA, saying: “Elbows are allowed now because the rules say so. Gloves are off and nothing else is to be expected.”

Amid the intensity of their political fight, both Wolff and



Monza clash ramped up the tension between teams and title rivals



Verstappen wasn’t penalised for his driving at Turn 4 in Brazil

Horner expressed the desire for the championship to be settled on track, and yet come the chequered flag in Abu Dhabi, the final battle was only just about to begin.

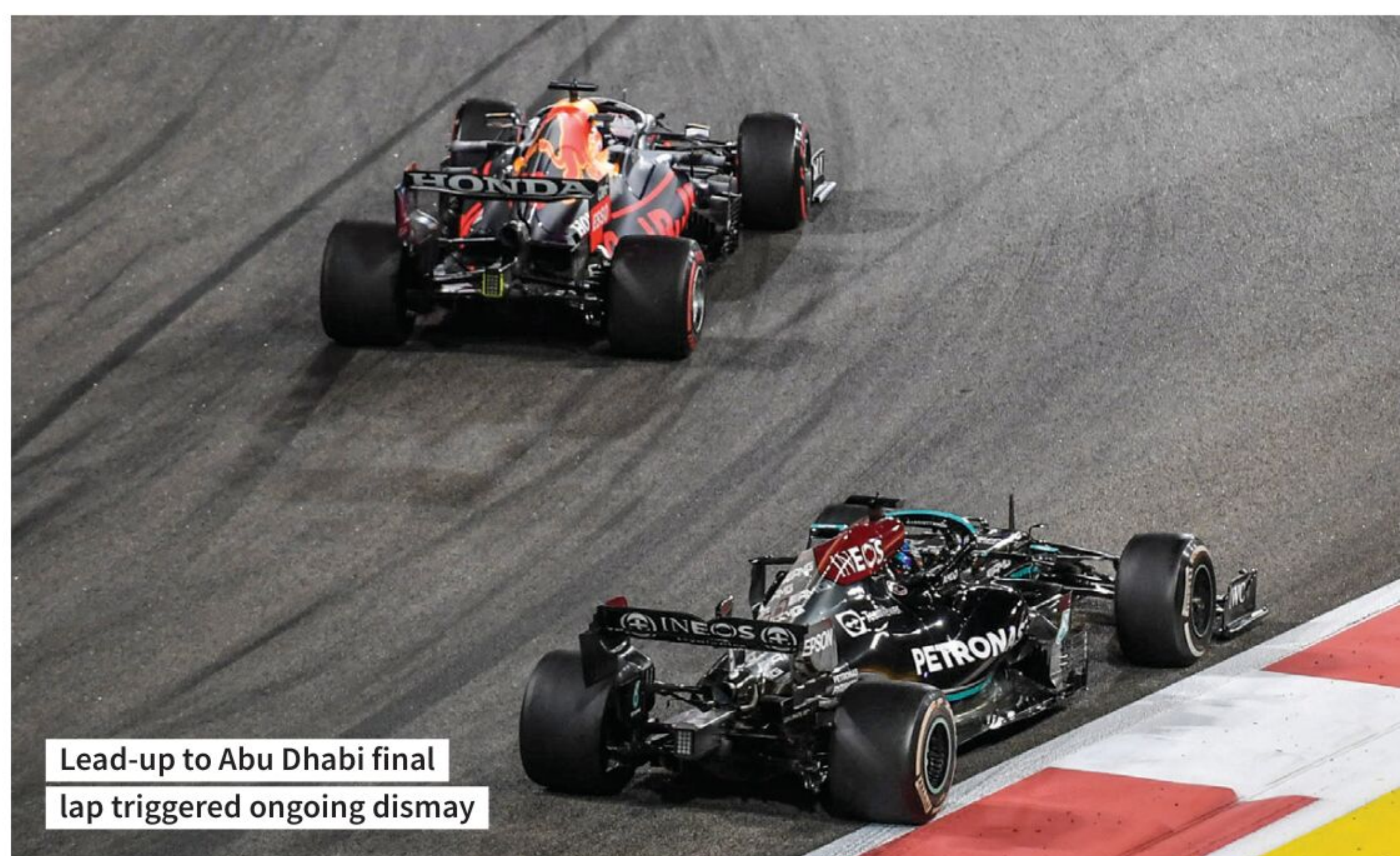
The circumstances of the late-restart procedure by FIA race director Michael Masi that ultimately led to the last-lap decider meant that, contrary to the hopes of both teams, it was not a championship finally settled on track. Within 30 minutes of Verstappen crossing the line to win the world championship after passing Hamilton moments earlier, Mercedes had lodged two protests with the FIA, whose race director, the team argued, had not followed his own rulebook. Masi had not allowed all lapped cars to unlap themselves, neither had he followed the regulation that would have timed out the race.

The protests were thrown out, but the explanation did little to satisfy Mercedes or Hamilton, both of whom felt they had been denied a rightful championship. It also meant that an F1 championship showdown that had gone mainstream thanks to its sporting drama was now in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. It was the ending no one wanted to a classic season.

Horner said Mercedes’ protest “felt a little bit desperate”, and noted that the team had taken a QC, who was part of the hearing, to the race. “We don’t go racing with barristers,” he said. “It was a shame that it ended up there, but the stewards made the right call.”



Gloves were off and tossed away in fraught Saudi Arabian GP



Lead-up to Abu Dhabi final lap triggered ongoing dismay

Mercedes notified the FIA of its intention to appeal the ruling, buying itself more time, but ultimately backed down just hours before the FIA end-of-season gala and Verstappen's formal coronation (for which neither Wolff nor Hamilton was present).

The FIA had by then confirmed that it would launch a full investigation into what happened in Abu Dhabi, but its claim that a "misunderstanding" had sparked such a fervent reaction from drivers, teams and fans left a sour taste for many. Mercedes said it would hold the FIA accountable for what happened through its investigation, while Wolff said he had "no interest" in talking to Masi. "It is up to the FIA to decide going forward how these decisions, how these situations, can be avoided," he said.

It was not the first time stewarding and decisions from race control had come into the spotlight in 2021, either. Verstappen's move on Hamilton in Brazil, and the drama between them in Saudi Arabia, left many drivers confused over how far they could push each other. The returning Fernando Alonso had been vocal throughout the year about inconsistency by the stewards, even saying at one point there were "different rules for different people".

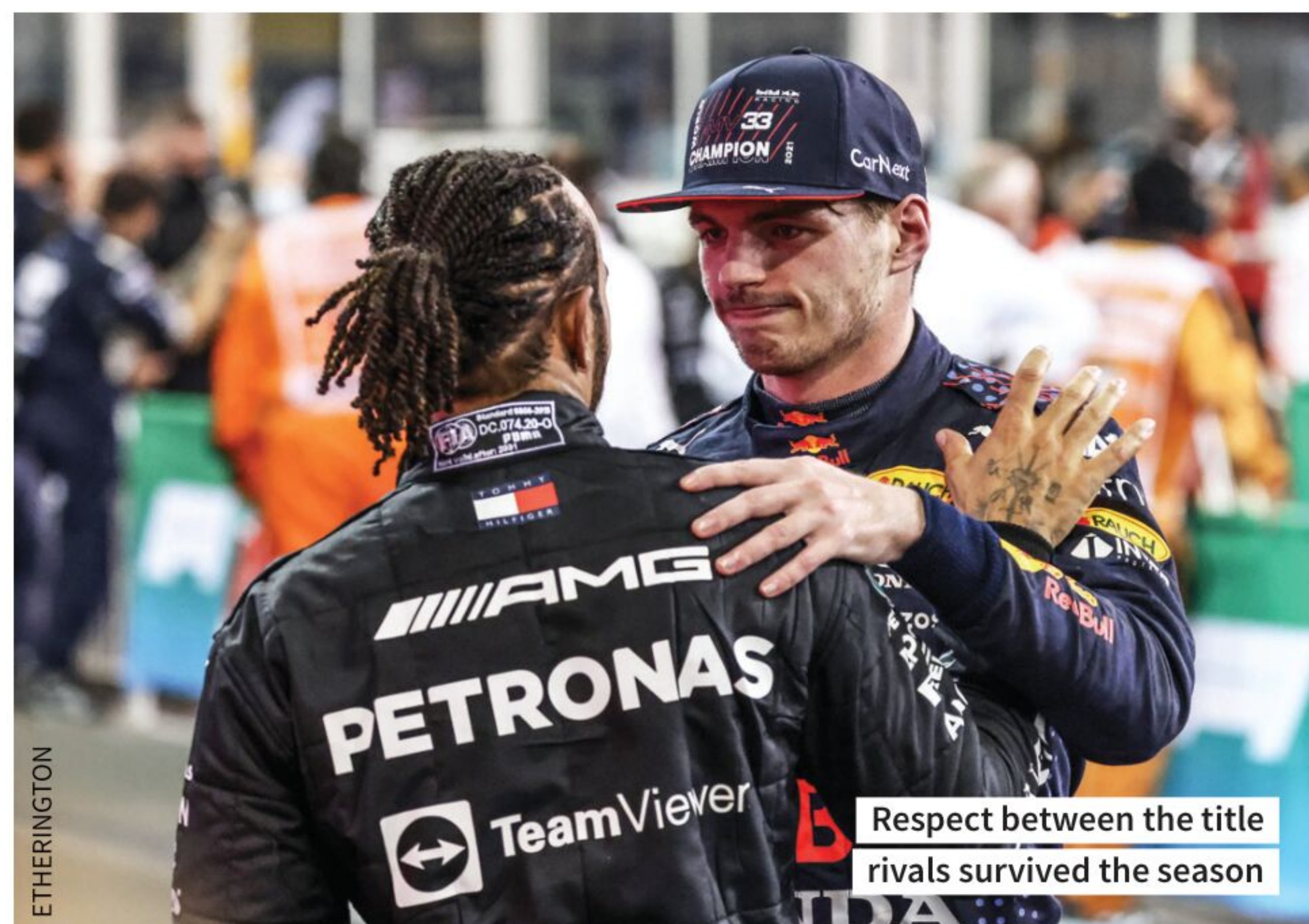
The FIA has ended 2021 at a critical juncture when it comes to F1. Newly elected president Mohammed Ben Sulayem will face dealing with the Abu Dhabi fallout as one of his first tasks, but there will be wider conversations over the winter about the rulebook and how races are officiated.

F1 must not let the events of Abu Dhabi unravel the amount of positives coming out of 2021. The series has bounced back strongly after 2020 was ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the success of *Drive to Survive*'s third season on Netflix a key factor in bringing in new fans. The United States GP enjoyed a record crowd of 400,000 over three days, and the financial balance sheets make for encouraging reading.

But things aren't about to get any easier for the F1 teams. A record 23-round calendar is planned for next year, crammed into just nine months to avoid a clash with the football World Cup, leading to concerns about burnout and the impact on personnel. "We mustn't neglect that we are a group of people and human beings travelling around the world," warned Sebastian Vettel in October. "The objective should be [that] we have a sustainable way to run our season, not only for our environment but also looking at the human resource."

There'll be even more on-track action next year courtesy of the expanded sprint race format, which will be present for six rounds after F1 deemed its debut in 2021 to have been a success. While format tweaks are anticipated, there has been no major pushback from teams about continuing to stage them next season, even if reaction from the sport's followers at times has seemed lukewarm.

F1's political landscape may have been a tale of two teams in 2021 but, as we enter 2022 and long-awaited new regulations that could lead to closer competition, the series as a whole faces wider questions over how a classic season with so much good could have ended in such controversial fashion. ■



Respect between the title rivals survived the season

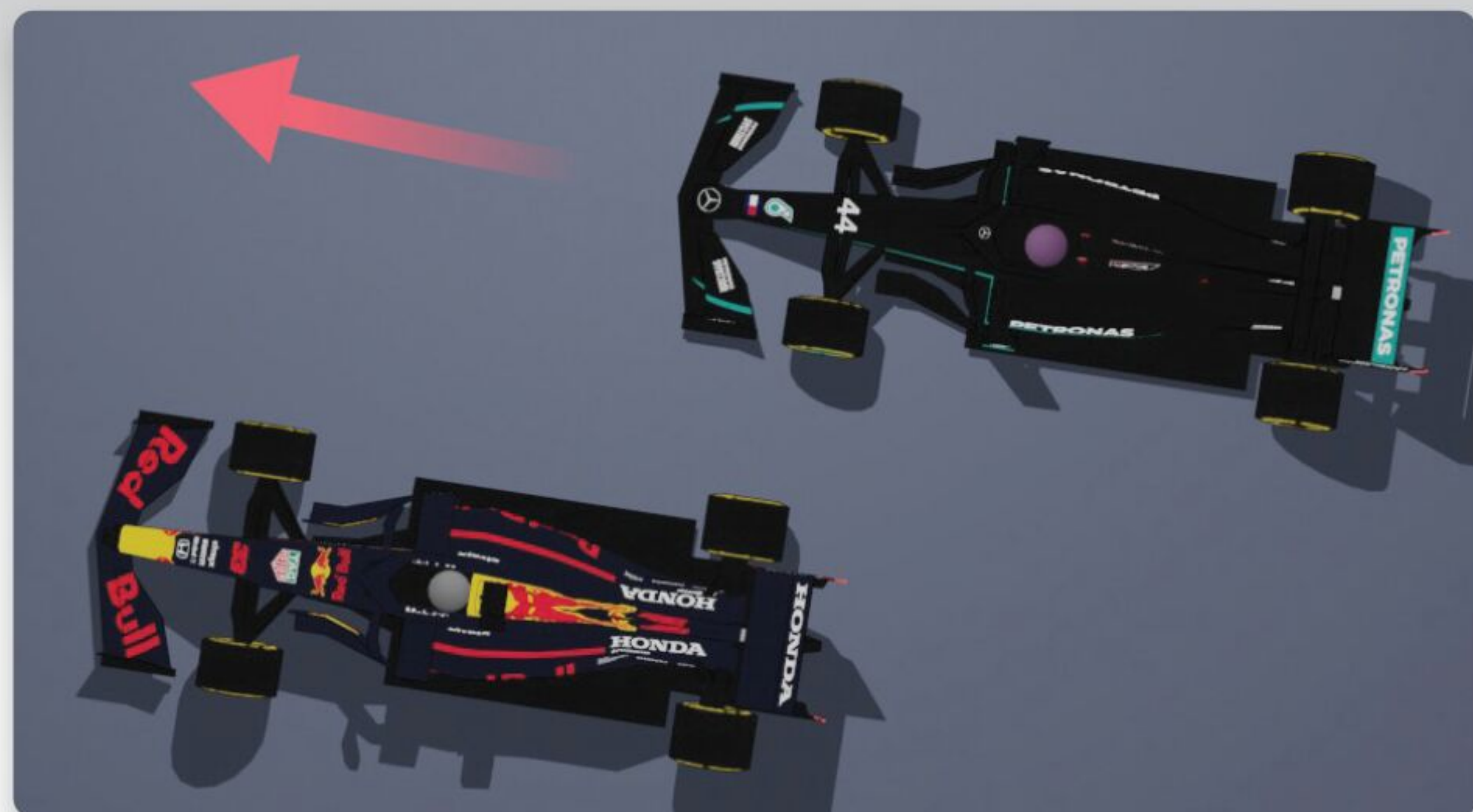
TOP STORIES

Top 10 Formula 1 Autosport.com stories of 2021

*A run-through of the most-read news-related stories of the year**

HAYDN COBB

*Accurate as of 17 December 2021



1

The details at the heart of the Hamilton vs Verstappen Silverstone clash

With Red Bull furious after Lewis Hamilton clashed with Max Verstappen in the British GP, it launched a request to review Hamilton's 10-second penalty, and had reserve driver Alexander Albon re-enact racing lines to provide 'new' evidence. Autosport examined the key details.



2

How Formula 1's safety car restart rules weren't followed in Abu Dhabi GP

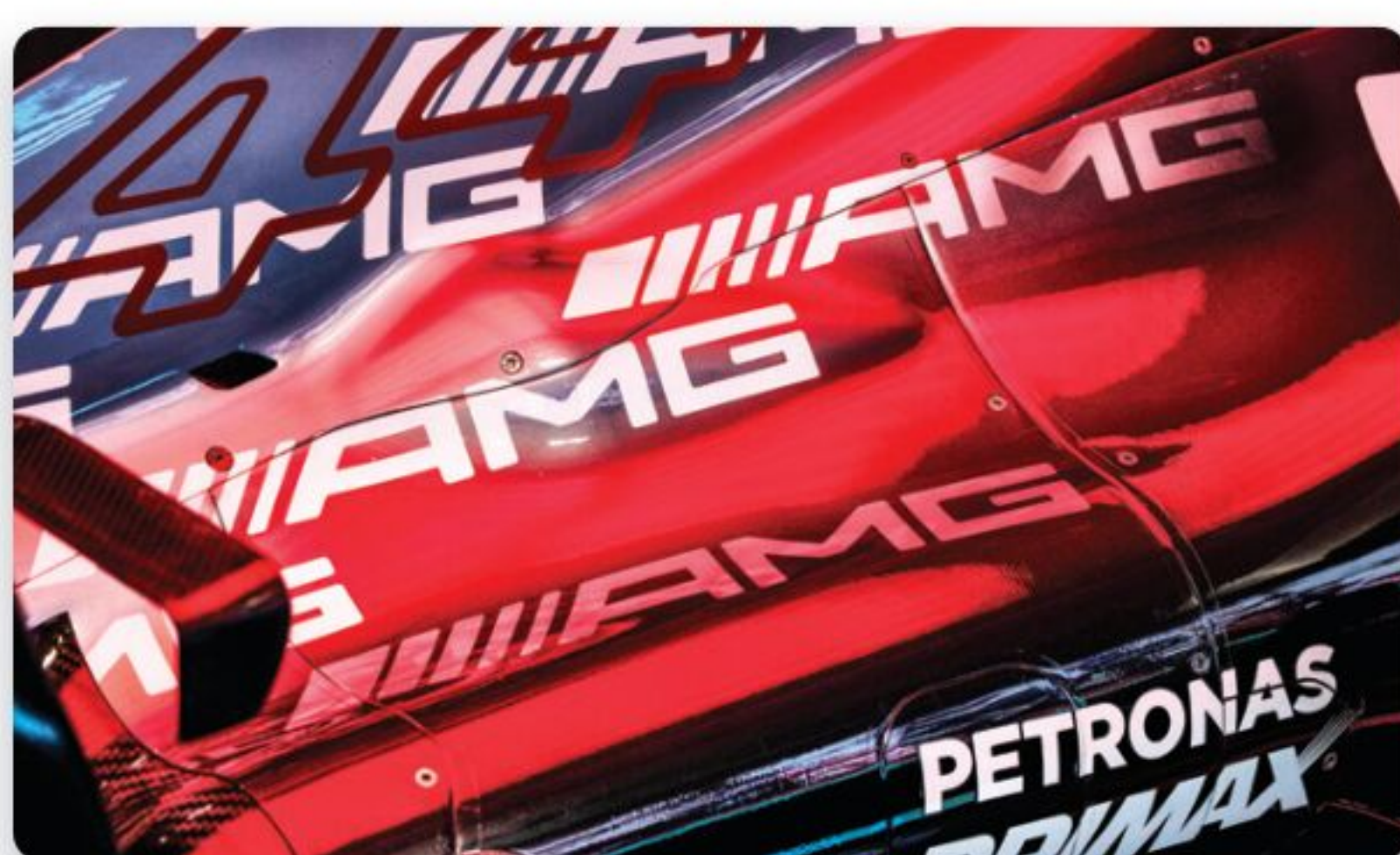
F1 rules under scrutiny became a main theme of the season. Here it was Mercedes aggrieved by decisions, chiefly Michael Masi's call to allow only the five drivers between Hamilton and Verstappen to unlap themselves and restart the Abu Dhabi GP with one lap to go, contrary to precedent.



5

Mercedes suffer pitstop nightmare in Bottas retirement at Monaco

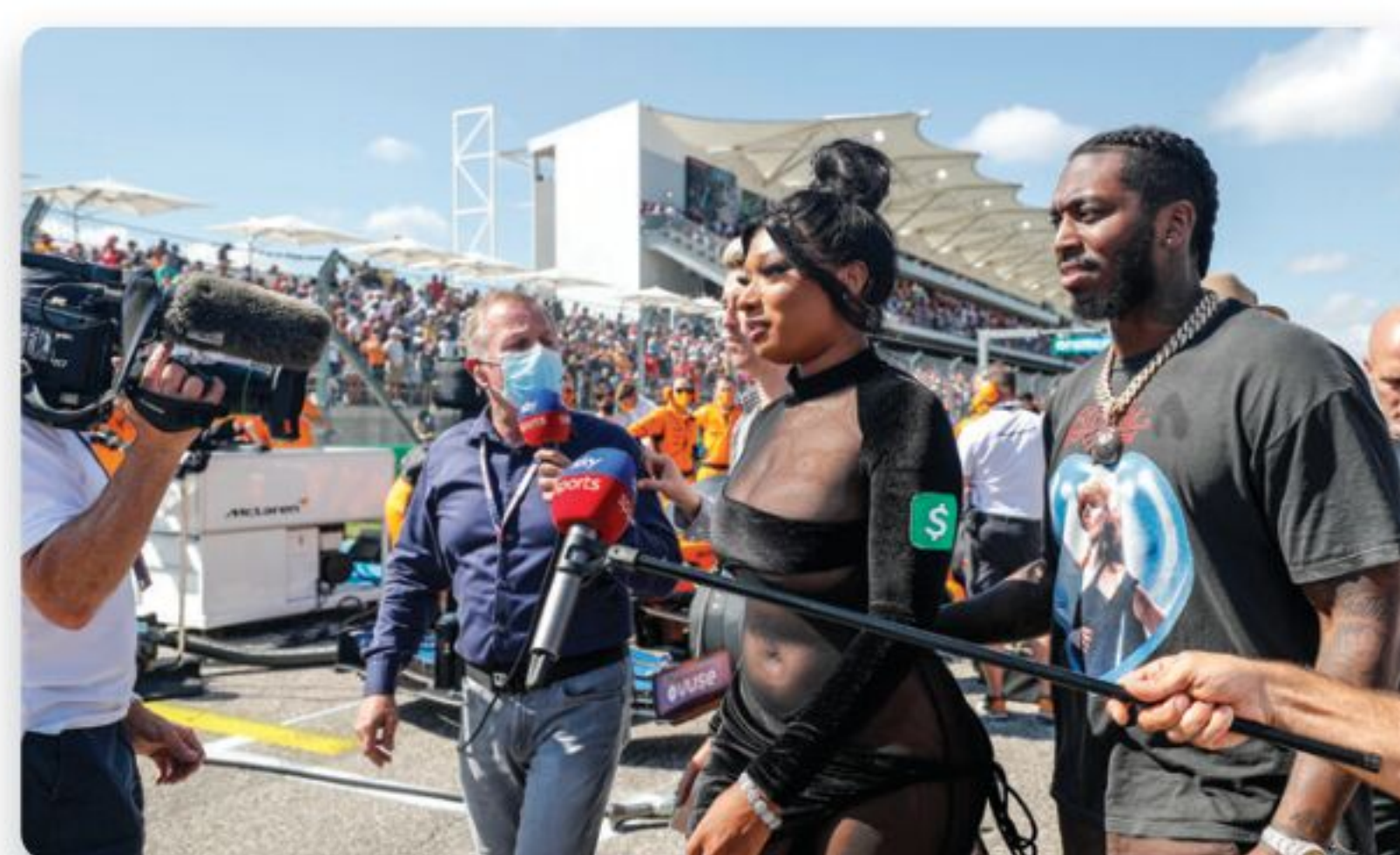
It was light-heartedly called the longest pitstop in F1 history: Valtteri Bottas suffered a cruel retirement in Monaco for a stuck front-right wheel that became locked when the wheelnut was stripped. Mercedes needed specialist equipment at its Brackley base to remove the nut, with the wheel finally freed two days after the race.



6

Mercedes and Red Bull strategic on power unit grid penalties in added dimension to title fight

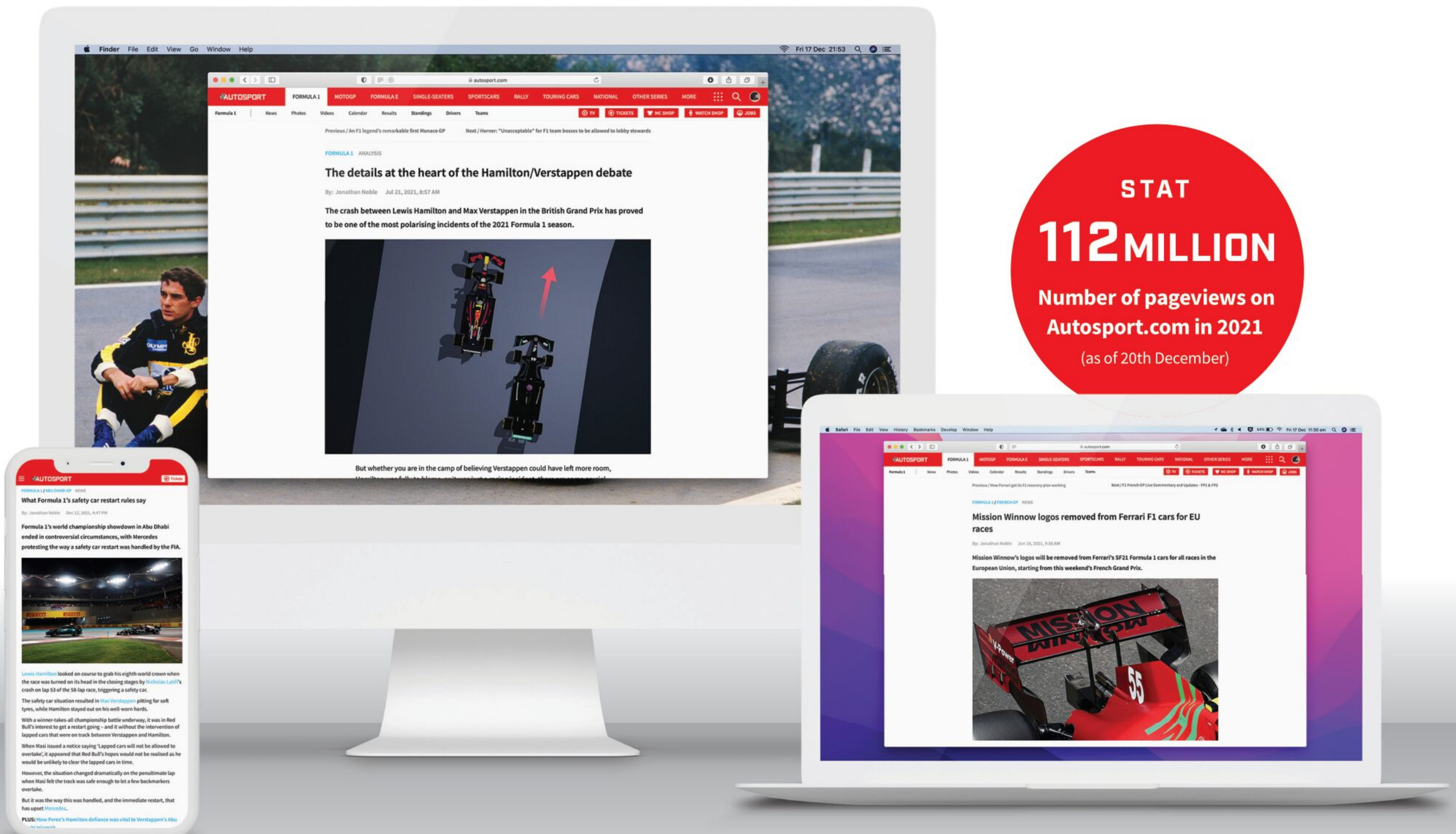
Mercedes and Red Bull were strategic in the title fight when taking new parts with subsequent grid drops. Red Bull opted for a full engine replacement for Verstappen in Russia with a grid penalty already due for his Monza crash with Hamilton, and Mercedes did similar for Hamilton in Brazil.



7

F1 stops bodyguards joining the grid after Megan Thee Stallion incident with Brundle

When Martin Brundle's famed pre-race grid walk returned for the United States GP after COVID-19 restrictions, it inadvertently created a showdown between the F1 pundit and rapper Megan Thee Stallion's entourage. After a confrontation that sent social media wild, F1 ordered a clampdown on grid access for bodyguards.



3 Mission Winnow logos removed from Ferrari F1 cars for European races

Perhaps an unusual story to grab the headlines: the appearance then disappearance of the Mission Winnow logos on Ferrari's car, which came down to a European Union ruling. The branding for the Philip Morris initiative that started in 2019 returned to the car for the races outside Europe.

4 Why Hamilton didn't break F1's rules for reversing on track in Imola

In the incident of Hamilton reversing on track after an off during the Emilia Romagna GP, there was no controversy or questions over rule breaches. Rules state cars must have a reverse gear in case of an incident and, assuming drivers return to the track in a safe manner, there is no threat of foul play.



8 Red Bull warned over Verstappen victory celebration burnout at Styrian GP

Not for the first time in 2021, Red Bull was told off by the FIA after Verstappen celebrated his Styrian Grand Prix victory with a burnout on the finish line. Red Bull was given a warning that any future incidents would not be tolerated on safety grounds.

9 Cost of entry into motorsport in the spotlight after Hamilton "billionaire boys' club" comment

The cost of accessing motorsport was highlighted by Hamilton after he called F1 a "billionaire boys' club", and Mercedes boss Toto Wolff backed his call to make entry more affordable. F1 is also set to provide more opportunities for youngsters from underprivileged backgrounds.

10 Mercedes protest Abu Dhabi GP restart before dropping appeal

Encapsulating F1 in 2021, the Abu Dhabi GP ended in the stewards' room when Mercedes protested the safety car restart call. After its protests were dismissed, it lodged an intention to appeal as it felt Hamilton was robbed of the title. Four days later Mercedes dropped the appeal and the FIA launched its own probe into the matter.

STATISTICS

The year in numbers

COMPILED BY FORIX.AUTOSPORT.COM AND KEVIN TURNER

DRIVERS' STANDINGS																								
POS	DRIVER	BHR	EMI	PRT	ESP	MCO	AZE	FRA	STY	AUT	GBR	HUN	BEL	NLD	ITA	RUS	TUR	USA	MEX	BRA	QAT	SAU	ARE	PTS
1	Max Verstappen	2nd	1st	2nd	2nd	1st	18th	1st	1st	1st	R	9th	1st	1st	R	2nd	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	2nd	1st	395.5
2	Lewis Hamilton	1st	2nd	1st	1st	7th	15th	2nd	2nd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	2nd	R	1st	5th	2nd	2nd	1st	1st	1st	2nd	387.5
3	Valtteri Bottas	3rd	R	3rd	3rd	R	12th	4th	3rd	2nd	3rd	R	12th	3rd	3rd	5th	1st	6th	15th	3rd	R	3rd	6th	226
4	Sergio Perez	5th	11th	4th	5th	4th	1st	3rd	4th	6th	16th	R	19th	8th	5th	9th	3rd	3rd	3rd	4th	4th	R	15th	190
5	Carlos Sainz Jr	8th	5th	11th	7th	2nd	8th	11th	6th	5th	6th	3rd	10th	7th	6th	3rd	8th	7th	6th	6th	7th	8th	3rd	164.5
6	Lando Norris	4th	3rd	5th	8th	3rd	5th	5th	5th	3rd	4th	R	14th	10th	2nd	7th	7th	8th	10th	10th	9th	10th	7th	160
7	Charles Leclerc	6th	4th	6th	4th	DNS	4th	16th	7th	8th	2nd	R	8th	5th	4th	15th	4th	4th	5th	5th	8th	7th	10th	159
8	Daniel Ricciardo	7th	6th	9th	6th	12th	9th	6th	13th	7th	5th	11th	4th	11th	1st	4th	13th	5th	12th	R	12th	5th	12th	115
9	Pierre Gasly	17th	7th	10th	10th	6th	3rd	7th	R	9th	11th	5th	6th	4th	R	13th	6th	R	4th	7th	11th	6th	5th	110
10	Fernando Alonso	R	10th	8th	17th	13th	6th	8th	9th	10th	7th	4th	11th	6th	8th	6th	16th	R	9th	9th	3rd	13th	8th	81
11	Esteban Ocon	13th	9th	7th	9th	9th	R	14th	14th	R	9th	1st	7th	9th	10th	14th	10th	R	13th	8th	5th	4th	9th	74
12	Sebastian Vettel	15th	15th	13th	13th	5th	2nd	9th	12th	17th	R	EX	5th	13th	12th	12th	18th	10th	7th	11th	10th	R	11th	43
13	Lance Stroll	10th	8th	14th	11th	8th	R	10th	8th	13th	8th	R	20th	12th	7th	11th	9th	12th	14th	R	6th	11th	13th	34
14	Yuki Tsunoda	9th	12th	15th	R	16th	7th	13th	10th	12th	10th	6th	15th	R	DNS	17th	14th	9th	R	15th	13th	14th	4th	32
15	George Russell	14th	R	16th	14th	14th	17th	12th	R	11th	12th	8th	2nd	17th	9th	10th	15th	14th	16th	13th	17th	R	R	16
16	Kimi Raikkonen	11th	13th	R	12th	11th	10th	17th	11th	15th	15th	10th	18th	DNS	-	8th	12th	13th	8th	12th	14th	15th	R	10
17	Nicholas Latifi	18th	R	18th	16th	15th	16th	18th	17th	16th	14th	7th	9th	16th	11th	19th	17th	15th	17th	16th	R	12th	R	7
18	Antonio Giovinazzi	12th	14th	12th	15th	10th	11th	15th	15th	14th	13th	13th	13th	14th	13th	16th	11th	11th	11th	14th	15th	9th	R	3
19	Mick Schumacher	16th	16th	17th	18th	18th	13th	19th	16th	18th	18th	12th	16th	18th	15th	R	19th	16th	R	18th	16th	R	14th	0
20	Robert Kubica	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15th	14th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
21	Nikita Mazepin	R	17th	19th	19th	17th	14th	20th	18th	19th	17th	R	17th	R	R	18th	20th	17th	18th	17th	18th	R	DNS	0

2021 CALENDAR 1 Bahrain GP (Sakhir), 2 Emilia Romagna GP (Imola), 3 Portuguese GP (Algarve), 4 Spanish GP (Barcelona), 5 Monaco GP (Monte Carlo), 6 Azerbaijan GP (Baku), 7 French GP (Paul Ricard), 8 Styrian GP (Red Bull Ring), 9 Austrian GP (Red Bull Ring), 10 British GP (Silverstone), 11 Hungarian GP (Hungaroring), 12 Belgian GP (Spa), 13 Dutch GP (Zandvoort), 14 Italian GP (Monza), 15 Russian GP (Sochi), 16 Turkish GP (Istanbul), 17 United States GP (Austin), 18 Mexican GP (Mexico City), 19 Sao Paulo GP (Interlagos), 20 Qatar GP (Losail), 21 Saudi Arabian GP (Jeddah), 22 Abu Dhabi GP (Yas Marina).

Constructors' Standings																								
Pos	Constructor	BHR	EMI	PRT	ESP	MCO	AZE	FRA	STY	AUT	GBR	HUN	BEL	NLD	ITA	RUS	TUR	USA	MEX	BRA	QAT	SAU	ARE	PTS
1	Mercedes	41	19	41	40	7	0	30	34	30	43	18	7.5	34	18	35	36	27	18	43	25	41	26	613.5
2	Red Bull	28	25	30	29	37	25	41	37	34	3	2	12.5	29	12	20	33	40	40	33	31	18	26	585.5
3	Ferrari	12	22	8	18	18	16	0	14	14	26	15	2.5	16	20	15	16	18	18	19	10	10	16	323.5
4	McLaren	18	23	12	12	15	12	18	10	21	22	0	6	1	45	19	6	14	1	1	2	11	6	275
5	Alpine	0	3	10	2	2	8	4	2	1	8	37	3	10	5	8	1	0	2	6	25	12	6	155
6	AlphaTauri	2	6	1	1	8	21	6	1	2	1	19	4	12	0	0	8	2	12	6	0	8	22	142
7	Aston Martin	1	4	0	0	14	18	3	4	0	4	0	5	0	6	0	2	1	6	0	9	0	0	77
8	Williams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
9	Alfa Romeo	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	13
10	Haas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

AVERAGE GRID POSITION





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DRIVER SUPERTIMES

DRIVER	SUPERTIMES (%)
Max Verstappen	100.266
Valtteri Bottas	100.375
Lewis Hamilton	100.398
Pierre Gasly	100.922
Sergio Perez	100.950
Lando Norris	100.959
Charles Leclerc	100.971
Carlos Sainz Jr	101.103
Daniel Ricciardo	101.375
Fernando Alonso	101.581
Esteban Ocon	101.652
Sebastian Vettel	101.757
Yuki Tsunoda	101.962
Antonio Giovinazzi	101.982
Lance Stroll	101.996
George Russell	102.091
Kimi Raikkonen	102.418
Nicholas Latifi	102.650
Mick Schumacher	103.271
Robert Kubica	103.662
Nikita Mazepin	103.833

Driver supertimes are based on taking each driver’s fastest single lap of each weekend, expressed as a percentage of the overall fastest time, averaged over the season.



Poles taken based on qualifying, not sprint races
(official scores would be Verstappen 10, Hamilton 5, Bottas 4, Leclerc 2, Norris 1. Red Bull 10, Mercedes 9, Ferrari 2, McLaren 1)

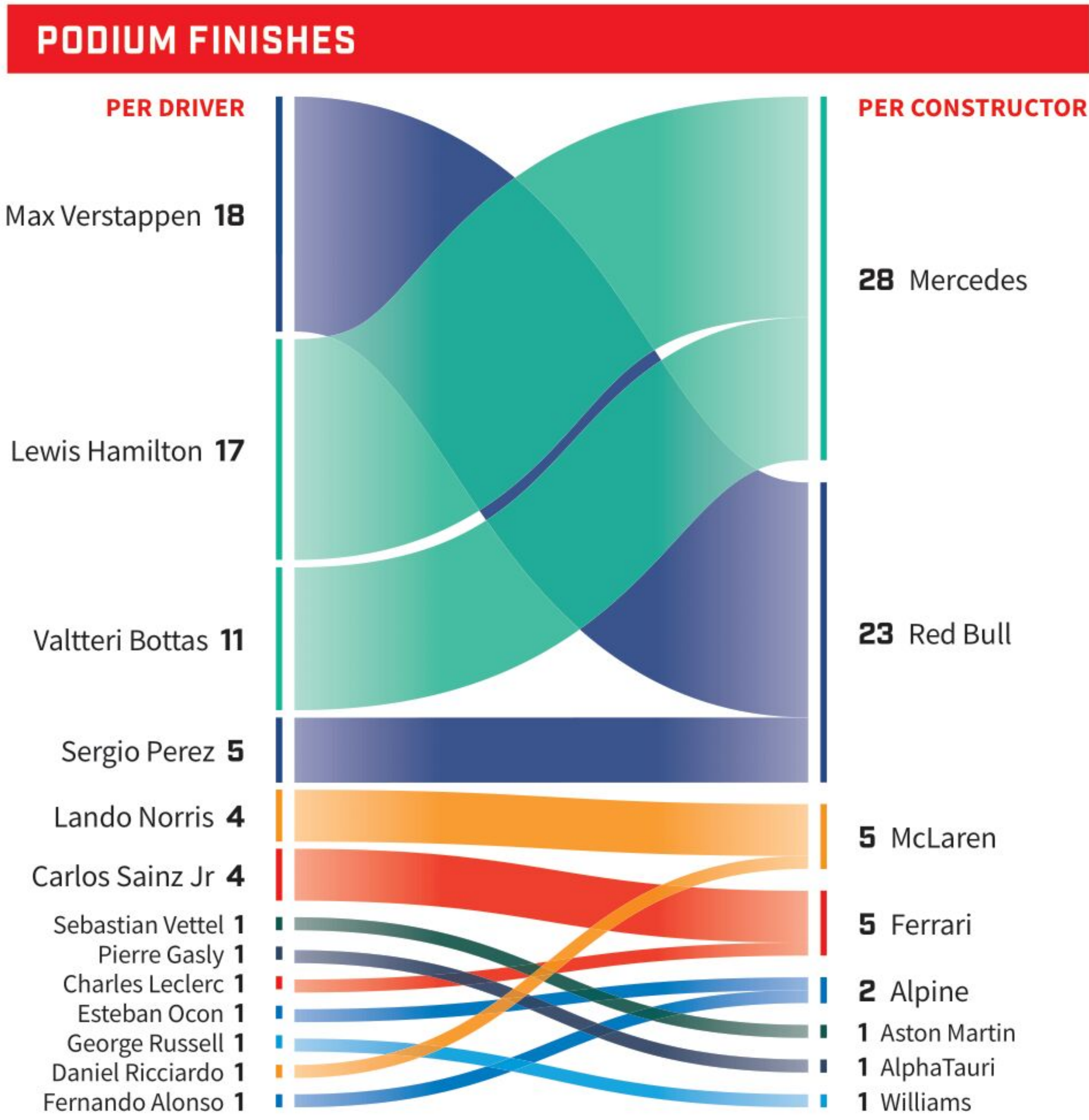
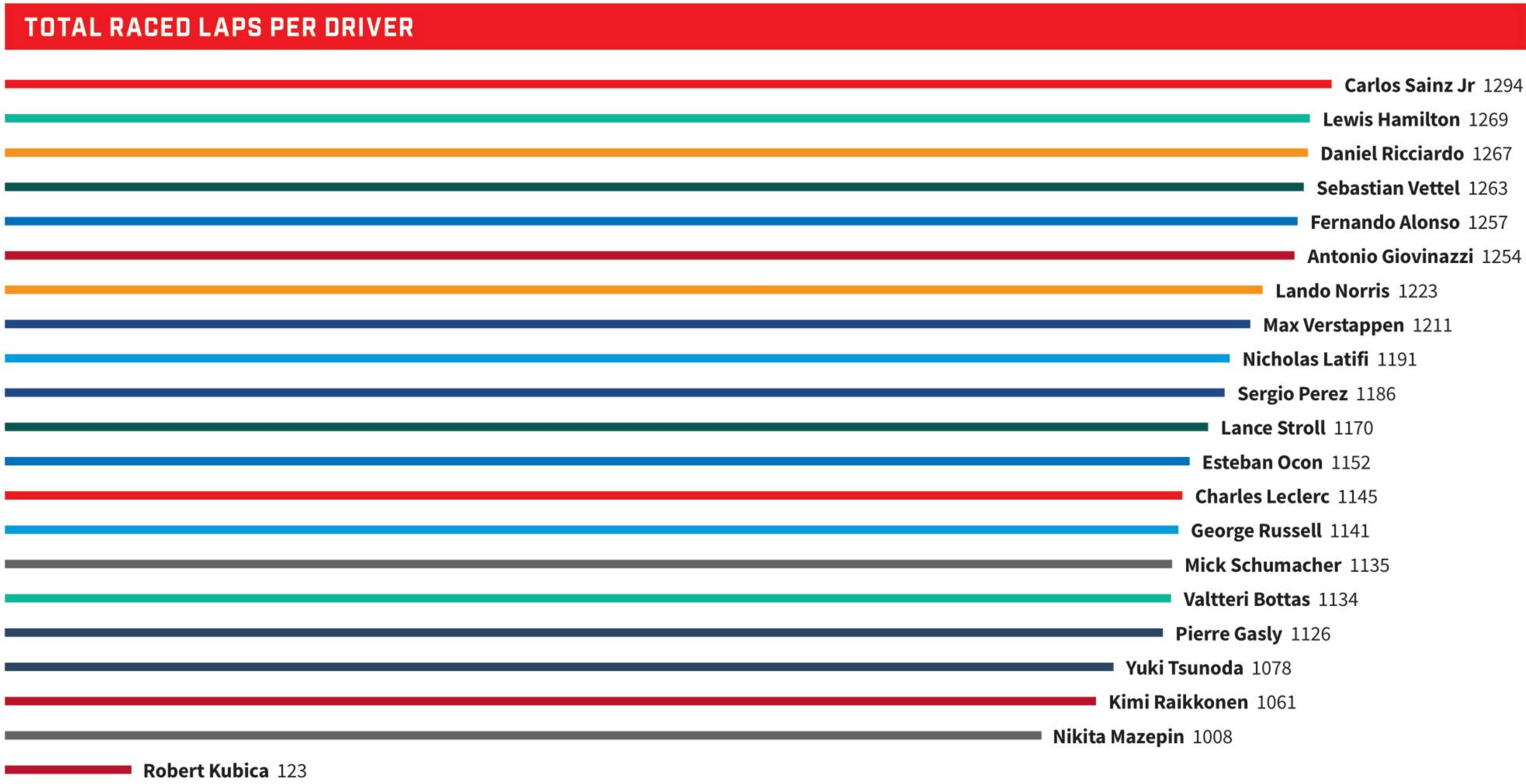


BIG NUMBER

41

Hamilton made the most pit visits during the races
(passes behind the safety car in Belgium are ignored)



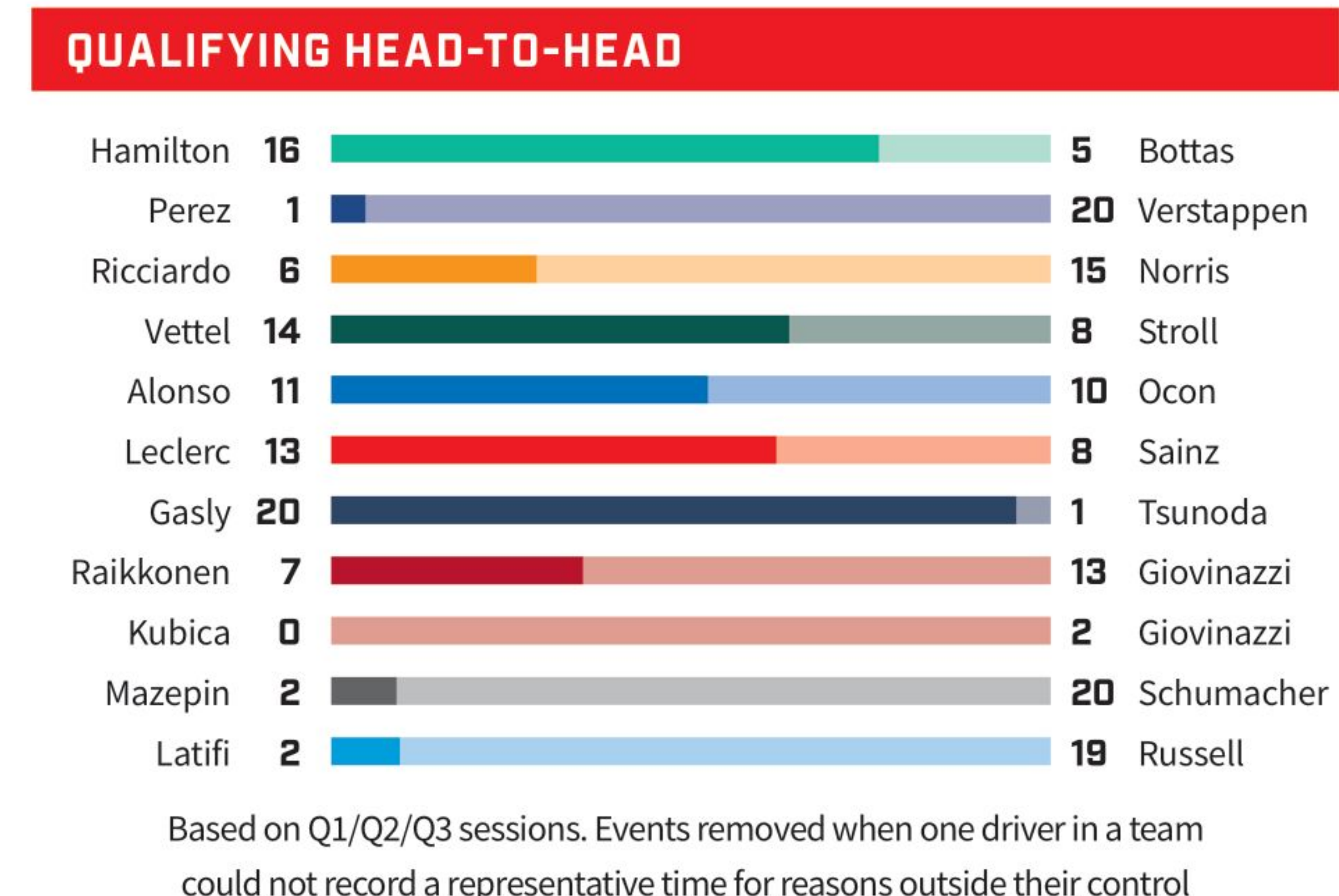


Q3 APPEARANCES

DRIVER	NO.
Valtteri Bottas	22
Lewis Hamilton	21
Lando Norris	21
Max Verstappen	21
Sergio Perez	19
Pierre Gasly	18
Charles Leclerc	18
Carlos Sainz Jr	15
Daniel Ricciardo	13
Fernando Alonso	11
Esteban Ocon	11
Yuki Tsunoda	9
Sebastian Vettel	7
Lance Stroll	6
Antonio Giovinazzi	4
George Russell	4

LAPS LED

DRIVER	LAPS	CONSTRUCTOR	LAPS
Max Verstappen	652	Red Bull	698
Lewis Hamilton	297	Mercedes	376
Valtteri Bottas	79	McLaren	79
Esteban Ocon	66	Ferrari	72
Charles Leclerc	60	Alpine	68
Daniel Ricciardo	48	Aston Martin	4
Sergio Perez	46		
Lando Norris	31		
Carlos Sainz Jr	12		
Sebastian Vettel	4		
Fernando Alonso	2		





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